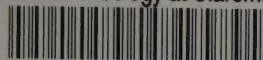


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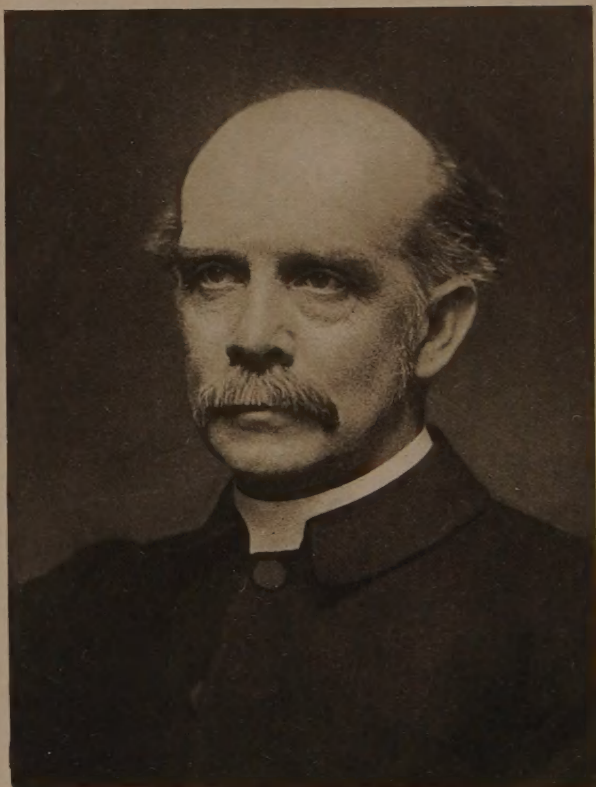


James Drummond Taylor.









/ Edmund Taylor



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**James Drummond Taylor,**

TRINITY CHURCH, SALTCOATS.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

WITH

SERMONS, WORDS TO THE CHILDREN,

AND

LECTURES ON FOREIGN TRAVEL.

EDITED BY

W. W. BEVERIDGE.



Ardrossan:

ARTHUR GUTHRIE & SONS.

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TO  
HIS FATHER.



## P R E F A C E.

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*THIS little book is published to meet the wish of those who loved JAMES DRUMMOND TAYLOR and desire a memorial that may prolong somewhat the savour of his saintly memory, and of those who profited by his manifold ministry, and would fain profit still by the remembrances and echoes of it.*

*The SERMONS—with the exception of the semi-jubilee discourse—have been selected from those which Mr. TAYLOR chose for most frequent use when occupying pulpits other than his own. The WORDS TO THE CHILDREN are all that could be satisfactorily reproduced from the notes of his addresses to the young, which he never wrote out in full. As here printed, they lack something of the fulness and finish which characterised them when spoken by the lips that are silent now.*

*I gratefully acknowledge the kindness of those who have aided me with their reminiscences. Much material remains unused, as my aim has been to make the memorial volume consist, as far as possible, of Mr. TAYLOR'S own work.*

PORT-GLASGOW,  
March, 1902.





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## ❖ Biographical Sketch. ❖

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JAMES DRUMMOND TAYLOR was born at Edinburgh, on the 2nd of August, 1848. He was the third son of James Taylor, publisher, whose name is specially associated with the issue of large type editions of devotional works. His mother, Agnes Drummond, was a lady of singularly unselfish disposition; her thoughts and activities were all for others. It was from her that her son inherited his spirit of self-sacrifice and eagerness to do good to men, even at sore cost to himself. From his father he took his love of neatness, orderliness, and method. Even when a child, his boxes and drawers were models of arrangement and tidiness.

Instinctively devout, and reared in an atmosphere of piety, James was early regarded, alike by himself and all the members of the family, as destined for the office of the ministry. His supreme pleasure, when a boy, was to conduct a church in the house.

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He occupied a pulpit formed of a Canadian apple barrel cut down in front to constitute a reading desk, and was robed in a black cloak which was made for him by his mother, who was not permitted to forget the bands. His younger brother, in the capacity of precentor, sat with his back to the apple barrel, and duly raised the tune. A regular form of service was gone through, including intimations, and not omitting the collection. The discourse was often read from a book of children's sermons, kept for the purpose. Sometimes the audience, which consisted of the gracious mother and the younger members of the family, had difficulty in preserving the gravity of demeanour expected of them. When the precentor, who was specially prone to transgress, revealed by smile or laugh that he had failed to remember the solemnity of the occasion and the dignity of his office, he was quickly brought back to a sense of what was fitting, by receiving from the occupant of the pulpit a smart rap on the head with the Bible. Sometimes, when the sermon was long, the precentor rose in rebellion and broke up the service, which was very disconcerting to "the little minister."

His early designation to the work of the ministry was confirmed when he entered his teens, and came under the influence of a revival of religion which was blessing the land. This time with intelligence, and by a definite act of decision, he consecrated himself to the service of Christ.

His school days were mainly passed at the

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secondary school attached to Moray House Normal Training College, under Dr. William Kennedy. His old school-fellows tell that he was always diligent, methodical, and precise, and took a high place in his classes. They looked upon him as a pure-minded, God-fearing boy, and the very soul of honour. There was an air of virginity about him which manifested itself in a habit he had of suddenly erecting himself, at times, when engaged in conversation, and which gave the impression that there was in him a nobility of soul which must on no account be trifled with. He never cared much for sports; but he was a great talker, and fond of an argument. His chief interest was in churches and ministers, and he was a perfect encyclopædia of knowledge regarding the affairs of the United Presbyterian Church. His supreme purpose of entering the holy ministry was seldom absent from his thoughts.

Between him and the attainment of the office on which his heart was set, lay at least nine years of preparatory study at the University and Theological Hall. His spirit of manly independence, and the characteristic desire to assume his own responsibilities, led him to resolve to be as light a burden as possible upon his father during these long years of student life. His connection with Moray House Normal School suggested the idea of self-support by teaching. At the close of his curriculum at the school, he passed with credit as a pupil teacher. Recommended by Dr. Kennedy, he and a class-fellow

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presented themselves for selection for a desirable vacancy in the Northern District School. Mr. Reid, the head master, a wonderfully able man, and a fine scholar, examined the two—James Taylor, small in body, but not in mind, and his tall and clever classmate. "The long and the short of it is," said he, "I will take both of you."

To his associates, James Taylor seemed to give up all his spare time to church work. In Newington United Presbyterian Church, of which his father was an honoured elder, he was a most devoted Sabbath-School teacher, a leading member of the young men's society, and a very active home mission worker.

His minister, the Rev. James Robertson, was a saintly man, of unwearied activity, and profoundly interested in mission effort at home and abroad. His preaching was characterised by great fervour, and lit up by the touches of a fine poetic temperament. He was a prince of preachers to children. His ministry and personality left a deep impress on James Taylor, which appeared in his care for the children, and his attractive way of speaking to them; in his zeal for home and foreign missions; and in his habit of spiritualising Scripture, making it yield unsuspected and memorable meanings, in which he excelled by reason of his instinctive devoutness of spirit, and a delicacy of touch by which his mind illuminated the surface of things, as the sunshine does, more, perhaps, than penetrated to the deeper meanings.



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The subject of our sketch entered the University of Edinburgh in his eighteenth year. He studied hard, and, though the work of teaching absorbed too much of his time, he distinguished himself in at least one of his classes, being prizeman in mathematics.

During his student days, phrenology engaged much public attention. Laughingly, yet half-believing while he laughed, he allowed his head to be "read" by one who had become celebrated for his phrenological skill. The elaborate "phrenological character" has been preserved. It not incorrectly delineates its subject when it says:—"You have a distinct degree of energy, industry, and intensity of thought and feeling. You have a strong will and great determination, and are spirited in overcoming obstacles. You are naturally methodical. Your veneration is a cultured faculty, conscientiousness and hope are distinctly developed. Your sympathies are easily awakened, and you readily take an interest in the welfare of others. It is quite easy for you to forget yourself while you are engaged in some labour of love and humanity. You are much interested in children." Thus far the phrenologist was right, but he erred widely when he added:—"You have more love for the practical and useful than for the beautiful and artistic; and you are not witty." There was always an unpractical strain in James Taylor, together with a fine sense of beauty which led him to take delight in the artistic; while he had

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a gift of fancy and humour which made his conversation coruscate with wit. He had a quick eye for the ludicrous, could give a phrase a comical twist, and knew how to touch the springs of mirth. Even in his darkest days, his kindly humour twinkled like stars in his speech. The story was related in his presence, how Dr. Robertson of Irvine had been told of a mother who had supported her son at the University by keeping hens and selling the eggs, whereupon the witty poet-preacher remarked: "Would you call that a *layman*?" James Taylor's comment was: "I should rather have asked if she had *egged him on*."

In the year 1870, he passed from Edinburgh University to the Theological Hall of the United Presbyterian Church, where he sat at the feet of Drs. Eadie, Cairns, Harper and M'Michael. The conscientiousness with which he devoted himself to the work of his classes, his unaffected goodness, and the blameless name which he bore among his fellow-students, appear from a playful note penned to him, in the class-room, by one of them:—"J—— thinks you have escaped original sin. Beware of making us heretical by being *too good*!"

At the close of his first session at the Divinity Hall, he began to preach occasionally. His reverent manner, fine voice, choice diction, elevation of tone, and intense earnestness, engaged and impressed congregations, and caused his services to be very acceptable.

Shortly after taking license, he was appointed

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to preach in the church at Kilwinning, now Erskine Church. When a student, he had once occupied the pulpit, much to the satisfaction of the congregation. Now they were looking out for a colleague and successor to their aged minister, Mr M'Gregor, who was lying on his death-bed. A call, signed by every member of the congregation, was addressed to James Drummond Taylor. The call reached him at Wick, where he was officiating, after having been for a short time in Orkney. The members of the church at Wick approached him with a view to a call, and the congregation at Stromness also cast eyes upon him; but he resolved to accept the unanimous and enthusiastic invitation to the little Ayrshire town, and make proof of his ministry under the shadow of its venerable abbey. He contemplated with pleasure having for a near neighbour his old minister's distinguished brother, Dr. W. B. Robertson of Irvine, who, in a characteristic letter, written to his sister, referred to him as "his young Reverence Monsignore, the latest abbot-elect of Kilwinning."

On the 31st of August, 1875—a day the memory of which was ever to him a sacred thing—he was ordained at Kilwinning, and entered upon the work which he had always regarded as the noblest ambition of any man. The church was a commodious and comfortable structure, old-fashioned indeed, yet greatly in advance of the attic in which the forefathers of the congregation had worshipped, and which was described by

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Andrew Fuller on one occasion, when preaching there, as a "hen-roost."

The newly-ordained minister was most painstaking in his preparation for the pulpit, and always gave the people of his best. Alive to the need for being interesting, he was never guilty of what Dr. John Ker termed "the cardinal sin of preaching—wearisomeness." Thrilled with the interest of his message, and living in conscious possession of the redemption which he proclaimed, he preached with power. There was an immediate revival in the spiritual life of the congregation.

He manifested a special care for the lambs of his flock. The Sabbath School was thoroughly reorganised. Sermons to the children were delivered periodically, and were looked forward to with peculiar pleasure by the oldest in the congregation as well as the youngest.

To the young men and women, his Bible Class was perhaps the most enjoyable event of the Sabbath. His previous training, added to his natural gifts, made him a splendid teacher. He followed the Socratic method of instruction by question and answer. On one occasion, when the subject was the miracles of Christ, and the answers came very slowly, and then ceased to come at all, he asked: "Do you know what miracle I would be inclined to perform, if I could?" When no reply was made, he said: "I would make the dumb to speak."

His enthusiasm for mission work led him to start a mission at the Corsehill—a district mainly

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occupied by miners, most of whom were non-church-goers. His whole heart was thrown into this work, and he gathered about him a band of devoted workers, who visited from house to house. The mission thus begun proved very successful, and was the means of many being gathered into the church. Among his best helpers, year after year, were several able and earnest young men who are now ministers of the gospel.

In the closing days of 1879, a heavy sorrow came to him in the death, after a lingering illness, of his accomplished sister Agnes, who had accompanied him to Kilwinning on his ordination, and acted as mistress of his manse. "I had a great admiration for your lovely sister, Aggie," wrote Dr. Robertson, from Irvine. "Nothing pleased me more than to have her come along in the summer days and sit, as she sometimes did, for an hour or two at the organ, which she enjoyed—filling the house (though we might be in different rooms), flooding it with a sense of her gentle presence, and with a music, tender, devotional, modest, graceful, like herself, and in which her spirit seemed to melt away—with a joy that was more akin to tears than laughter. And the music has passed away, and the minstrel; but we shall hear it again—on a ten-stringed harp touched by the fingers of that little hand—where there shall be no more crying, but only the remembrance and echo that shall haunt the *Gloria in excelsis* up to the highest ranges, as a shadow often enriches the brilliancy. I remember to have

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said to her she ought to be very good, and so she was, for it seemed to me that the angels, in singing, often called her by name '*Agios!*' when singing to the Holy; and she smiled, I daresay at my pedantry, which had much truth in it, nevertheless. Forgive me if I think that before all angels she would look out for her dear old minister, and before both, and before all, for *Him* whom her heart loved above all, and with whom she *is*—and it is far better."

In the autumn of 1880, Mr. Taylor brought home a happy bride to the manse. He often made smiling reference to the circumstance that one of the preachers who, during his absence on his wedding tour, occupied his pulpit, unwittingly took as his text: "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?"

When one baby girl, and then another, came to brighten the manse, their presence made him very happy. There was nothing he enjoyed more than the companionship of little children. And he always had a singular attraction for the young. Like his Master, he liked the little children to come unto him, and they loved to do so. It was beautiful to see this busy minister, whom all revered, playing at hide-and-seek with little ones, behind dining-room curtains; or delighting them by acting as conjurer, and bringing forth, from the depths of his apparently empty hat, a seemingly inexhaustible store of flowers.

A dark shadow fell upon the happy home when lasting illness entered it. Long years of



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heart-wearing anxiety ensued. The sore trial was borne by him with brave, uncomplaining patience. The cross was carried on shoulders that were erect, though the feet were bleeding. But a pathetic undertone trembled beneath the richest passages in his sermons and prayers, and his ministrations grew in tenderness, and sympathy, and power to comfort.

Into his work he threw himself with added zeal. Busy all the week, he was uncommonly busy on the Sabbath. After his two services, morning and afternoon, he would first visit the Mission Sabbath School, and then hurry, with his light step and eager carriage, down to the Congregational School, at which he had always a few words to say upon the lesson. After this he conducted his Bible Class, which met later in the evening.

His occasional appearances in city pulpits were much appreciated, and on several occasions vacant Glasgow congregations made overtures to him. But these approaches, like others by a London congregation at a later period of his ministry, were invariably declined. His modest opinion of his own qualifications led him to underestimate his fitness for ministering to a city church. In one instance his attached people were much concerned lest he should be tempted by the larger sphere; but their anxiety was allayed when, on the Sabbath, he took for his text the words, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

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In the spring of 1889, it fell to him to preach one of the funeral sermons on the occasion of the death of his friend and neighbour, the Rev. George Philp, of the East Church, Saltcoats. The hearts of the pastorless people went out to the preacher with a wonderful unanimity. They were divided on other matters, but they were cordially agreed upon the great desirability of securing Mr. Taylor for their minister, in the trying circumstances in which they found themselves, with a new church half-built, and a division of opinion among them on the question of maintaining a separate congregational existence. This remarkable call occasioned Mr. Taylor much painful anxiety. He was deeply attached to the congregation to whom he had ministered so successfully for fourteen years. But the difficulties of the congregation at Saltcoats strongly appealed to his chivalrous nature. His was the true temper of the Christian soldier, which finds an attraction in the stiffest fight, and seeks the hardest and not the easiest task. The assurance had weight with him, that his going to Saltcoats would heal the breaches that had been made; and also the conviction that, in the rising watering-place, there was a field of labour sufficiently large to tax all his energies, and yet sufficiently promising to encourage him to enter it.

To the lasting regret of his congregation at Kilwinning, he accepted the call. It was a great wrench to part from the people to whom he had ministered so long; but he felt that he was going

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to a sphere where he would be able to do better work for the Master. On August 2nd, Trinity Church was opened for public worship, and four days thereafter James Drummond Taylor was inducted as its minister.

The hopes that had been entertained were not belied. The office-bearers and members gathered as one man round their pastor; and, under his zealous and enterprising ministry, the congregation entered upon a career of much prosperity and peace. A hall and class-rooms were built, the debt on the church extinguished, a pipe-organ introduced, and the offerings for congregational purposes so increased that aid from the Augmentation Fund was no longer needed, and the church became self-supporting. The membership grew steadily year by year. In summer, when the congregation was increased by the presence of visitors, who were attracted in large numbers by Mr. Taylor's ministry, the church was filled in every part, causing serious thoughts to be entertained of enlarging the edifice.

It was in the year following his induction to Trinity Church, that Mr. Taylor took his first trip abroad. Crossing the unruly North Sea, he visited Norway. Its bracing atmosphere, and scenes of picturesque grandeur, gave him a taste for foreign travel, which continued to grow by what it fed on.

Two years later, in company with his sister, elder brother, and other members of the family, he spent some weeks in Switzerland. He enjoyed

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to the full the shimmering lakes, lofty snow-peaks, and lovely valleys of the land of William Tell; and returned home with memories that were a refreshment to him for many a day.

In the beginning of 1887, he went, by appointment of the Foreign Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church, to Algiers, to conduct, for three months, the services in the church there. His sweet, eager, Christian spirit, his never-failing sympathy, and the radiance he always carried with him, endeared him to the invalids who were spending the winter in that genial climate, and made his ministry to them a memory that will leave them only with their lives.

The spring of 1889 found him travelling in Italy, in the companionship of two friends, lay and clerical. He visited Milan, Venice, and Florence, "following," as he put it, "the arts to their sacred seats, and, across the centuries, feeling the living touch of the genius of the old artists, sculptors, and architects."

On his return, he delivered, to the children, a series of "Sermonettes from my Holidays," each address having for its central illustration one of the sights he had visited; such as, Giotto's Tower, Michael Angelo's David, Savonarola's Hair Shirt, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It was his custom, in Trinity Church, to say a few words to the young each Sabbath morning, and this "handful of tender grass" for the lambs was to many the most pleasing and profitable portion of the service.

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Like the minister of his boyhood, he was fertile in expedients for attracting the attention of the children. He believed in showing them something. At his Band of Hope, in which he took great pleasure, he gave a long series of addresses entitled "Pennyworths from London," each address being illustrated by some article which he had bought in the streets of London for a penny. A frog was held up for admiration because "it is fond of water." A magnet was used to show "how little things may be attracted to the cause of temperance." A whistle pointed the moral that "people pay a good deal to wet their whistle." There was also a feeding-bottle, "the only bottle children should ever have anything to do with." One of the last Band of Hope addresses he delivered had a honeycomb for its text, and was entitled "A little friend with a sweet disposition."

Mr. Taylor undertook no work without careful preparation; every address he gave was a finished production. No minister was ever more conscientious and faithful in the discharge of all departments of his duty. "Thou art a minister of the Word," wrote the famous William Perkins beside his name on all his books, "mind thy business." James Drummond Taylor did not require to write these words upon his books, they were written upon his heart. He was most assiduous in pastoral visitation, and incessant in attention to the sick, the poor, the bereaved, and those exposed to special temptation. While

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maintaining in briskest activity the work of his congregation, he gave faithful attendance on the courts of the Church, where his counsel was much valued. He served on both the Home and Foreign Mission Boards of the United Presbyterian Church; and never had the Church a more loyal son, or one more willing to spend himself in advancing its interests.

For the welfare of the town in which his lot was cast, he wrought with characteristic zeal, closely identifying himself with every movement for the social and moral improvement of the community, and always eager to promote co-operation in service among the churches. He was, indeed, "in labours abundant." Toiling in the study, standing in the pulpit, lingering in the Sabbath School, passing to the platform, mourning at the funeral, rejoicing at the festival, hurrying to visit the sick and strengthen the tempted and pray with the aged, in journeyings oft to help his brethren and serve the Church—he was, to many who witnessed his activities, the very busiest minister they had ever known.

The semi-jubilee of his ministry came in 1900, and on October 25th, his grateful people gathered to honour him. In the name of a happy and rejoicing congregation, Mr. James Campbell presented to him a silver salver and a purse containing one hundred and fifty sovereigns, and gave expression to the great appreciation, esteem, and affection entertained for him. The speaker lingered, in touching terms, on the duty of not keeping such appreciative and loving sentiments locked up in



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the heart, unspoken, until after the loved one is gone, but of uttering them while he is still able to hear them, and be helped and gladdened by them. He quoted the lines—so significant now:—

“What worth is eulogy’s blindest breath  
When whispered in ears that are hushed in death?  
No, no, if you have a word of cheer,  
Speak it when I am alive to hear.”

The warm attachment and regard of his congregation thus expressed, in word and gift, when he was “alive to hear” and to receive, afforded much quiet joy and cheer to him whose course was to be so soon run.

Five days after the celebration of his semi-jubilee, Mr. Taylor journeyed to Edinburgh to take part in the union of the Church of his fathers with the Free Church. He had long looked forward to being present at this healing of a great rent in the robe of Christ, and of Scottish Christianity. With much gladness he walked in the procession that wended its way, from under the shadow of the grey old castle on the mossy crag, to the hall of union. When the supreme moment came, and the two Churches, which had been connected by so many ties of sympathy and tradition, were, with solemn ceremony, declared to be one in the name of the triune God, and hand clasped hand, and eye flashed to eye, and voice joined with voice in the psalm of thanksgiving, his eye was moist, and his voice quavered in the song.

A portion of his semi-jubilee gift was devoted

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to a long-purposed visit to Rome and the Bay of Naples. The text from which he preached on his return, "I must also see Rome," expressed one of the dreams of his life. Having tied up the loose ends of the winter's work, he turned his face to the sunny south. It was my privilege to be his fellow-traveller. With unconcealed emotion he crossed the yellow Tiber and entered the Eternal City. Days full of interest were spent in climbing the Janiculum, contemplating the treasures of the Vatican, lingering in the Forum, wandering amid the ruins on the Palatine, gazing on the sun-baked Colosseum, traversing the tomb-lined Appian Way hallowed by its memories of St. Paul, and threading by the light of flickering tapers the gloomy labyrinthine Catacombs. "Are you Catholics?" demanded the stalwart proselytising monk who led us through the lonely crypts. "No," was Mr. Taylor's prompt reply, "we are Presbyterians." "Ah! then," the monk rejoined, "your conversion very difficult!"

His love of the beautiful was gratified when he gazed upon the Bay of Naples, curving in every line of beauty. His modest appetite for the wonderful was more than satisfied when he looked down into the fiery throat of Vesuvius, and paced the streets of exhumed Pompeii. His eye for the ludicrous found a rich harvest in the street scenes of Naples—the morning cow being milked on the doorstep into the vessel provided by the customer, the man being shaved by the barber on the pavement of the crowded street, the little girl seated on a

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stool upon the side-walk while her mother searched among the tiny maid's matted locks. It was with great delight that he visited Pozzuoli, and stood upon the remains of the ancient pier on which St. Paul landed, and passed along the road still paved here and there with the very lava blocks on which the feet of the great apostle must have pressed.

The summer that followed was a busy time. Before autumn came he felt fagged. He had looked upon his Italian tour as his annual vacation; it was ever his custom to make his holidays as few and brief as possible. He was never long happy away from his beloved work. But change and rest were needed; so he exchanged pulpits and manses for September with the minister of Blackford. While he was in Perthshire, each forenoon only was given to rest and recreation, the remainder of the day was devoted to writing and other forms of work.

He returned to his congregation, full of plans for the winter. One project he was specially anxious to realize—that of employing a missionary to help him in his work among the poor and lapsed, whose sin and misery smote his heart like the sobs of a suffering child. With characteristic generosity he asked to be allowed to contribute one-fourth of the missionary's salary. His time was filled with duties. Few knew how full and many-sided a life he was living. In the last crowded days we find him writing to the younger of his daughters, who was at school in Edinburgh: "Yesterday I had no less than five meetings of

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one kind and another. To-day is the holiday, but it is all the same to me, I have my work to do." A united mission, in which he was deeply interested, was in progress. On Friday, November 29th, the mission closed, but he was absent at Galston conducting a service there. Saturday was occupied in transacting business in Glasgow, and paying a hurried visit to his father, sister, and daughter, in Edinburgh. Loving eyes that had not seen him for a time, noticed how wan and worn he looked.

He occupied the pulpit of Berkeley Street Church, Glasgow, on Sabbath morning. In the evening he preached in North Kelvinside Church. His text was, "Son, remember!" and in words full of earnestness and tenderness he discoursed on memory in the future life. It was his last sermon.

Early on Monday morning he was at home, and in his study, toiling at a lecture on "Cities and Sights of Sunny Italy," which he had unexpectedly to deliver that evening, by reason of the illness of the promised lecturer. He himself was far from well, and had only strength to write the introduction and a brief outline of the rest. Yet the lecture, when delivered, was in his best manner, concise, vivid, witty, and full of interest.

Tuesday forenoon was spent in the church offices, Glasgow, discussing with the Home Mission Secretary—the Rev. John Young, the friend of his youth—the details of the Home Mission enterprise into which he desired to lead his congregation. The self-sacrificing loyalty which never spared

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himself nor failed a friend, brought him, in spite of physical weakness, to Port-Glasgow to aid me, in the evening, at a lecture on our Italian tour. He returned to Saltcoats by the late train, that he might begin work early next morning. "I should have enjoyed the talk after," he remarked in the last letter he ever penned, "but, alas! for the next forenoon." That forenoon was employed in hard study; the afternoon was given to pastoral visitation. At his prayer meeting in the evening he was even brighter than usual, and delivered one of the best addresses that some of his audience had ever heard. A late meeting of his Church Session followed, at which his weariness did not damp the play of his bright spirit.

The following morning—Thursday, December 5th—found him busy at his desk. Laying down his pen for ever, he devoted the afternoon to visiting his congregation. He returned to the manse for tea. It was his intention to be engaged in pastoral visitation till a late hour, and he did not wish the members of the household to be kept sitting up until his return. So, after tea, he gathered them around him for family worship.

Rising from his knees, he went forth to his last duty. He passed from one house to another. He entered a home which was bound to him by ties that dated back to the time of his Kilwinning ministry. In his customary winsome and sunny spirit, which even the shadow of death could not oppress, he took part in happy conversation regarding the lasting attachment manifested toward

### *BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.*

him by the members of his first charge, and the prosperity and peace which God was permitting to attend his work among his present people. Suddenly he remarked that he felt faint. Sinking down, he heaved a little sigh. In a few moments he ceased to breathe, and "he whose soul was as pure as that of a little child, stood in the presence of the Master."

He had gone, as those who knew him best and loved him most could have wished—at his Master's work. He had lived for his people, and he had literally died among them. He had fallen, as a soldier falls, at the post of duty, in the immediate service of his Lord. His long-time friend and fellow-student, Dr. Armstrong Black of Toronto, wrote:—"It was noble and characteristically like him to die at a post of quiet and unobtrusive duty. I knew his intimate thoughts, and his motives, and his patience and self-sacrifice—ay! and his silent sorrow—and I am fain to say that a saintlier soul I have not yet met on these paths of time. So simple, and sincere, and single-eyed—I can think of no one who had his daily account so honestly and constantly made up and ready, or who can have given in his life account to the Master with greater joy."

Heart failure through overstrain, was given as the cause of death. His people had not known how persistently he had toiled beyond his strength in bearing the "Burden of the Lord," nor how much sweat of brow, and brain, and heart it had taken to make his ministry so successful.

## *BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.*

In looking through his papers after he was gone, we were deeply touched to find that one of the last entries he had made in his commonplace-book was an outline of that remarkable allegory, "The Artist's Secret." The painter's work had a wonderful crimson glow, and people went up and down saying, "We like the picture, and we like the glow." Other artists came and said, "Where does he get his colour from?" They asked him; he smiled and held his peace, and worked on with his head bent low. Always the work grew redder and redder, and the artist grew whiter and whiter. At last they found him dead before his picture. They looked into all his pots and crucibles, yet they did not find the secret of his colour there. But when they unrobed him to prepare him for burial, they found, on his left breast, above his heart, a wound—an old, old wound that must have been there for many a year. And they buried him, and still the people went about saying, "Where did he get his colour from?"

The secret of James Drummond Taylor's own successful work and early death was that he painted with his life-blood. At supreme cost to himself, he blessed others. F. W. Robertson wrote to one who thanked him for blessing received under his preaching: "I suppose the grand principle is the universal one—we can only heal one another with blood." It was with his heart's blood that Mr. Taylor healed so many hearts.

Early on a bleak, winter morning, the stricken

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congregation, co-Presbyters, and friends gathered to the church, to the pathetic funeral service; and then, amid a storm of wind and hail, followed the hearse as it bore away the remains of him who had taught them to revere and love him. The signs of universal mourning—drawn blinds, closed shops, bowed heads of men, wet eyes of women and little children—told that in Saltcoats that day there was “just one heart, and it was sore.”

When the family burying ground, in Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh, was reached, we found it covered with a mantle of fresh-fallen snow, which lifted our thoughts to the white robes of the redeemed. As we committed to the earth all that can perish of James Drummond Taylor, we prayed that God might give us grace to live as blamelessly, and suffer as patiently, and toil as heroically as he, so long as our working day beats out its hours. And, as we turned away from the new-made grave, we felt that we might find his epitaph in the Master's words, “*Well done, good and faithful servant!*”





S E R M O N S.



## The Singleness of Life.

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"He shall be gathered one by one."—*Isaiah xxvii. 12.*

THESE words embody a principle of the Divine action in relation to men which it is of the first importance we should understand. Human life is social. God setteth the solitary in families. Business operations are carried on through partnerships, associations, companies, syndicates. In religious enterprises co-operation is found desirable and necessary. We hear much of federations and organizations, of socialism and collectivism, of unity and solidarity. But the danger here is the tendency to depreciate the individual influence, to repress what is peculiar and characteristic. Many thus content themselves with talking about and taking credit for the work done by the few, and responsibility is often disclaimed by one and another till it seems to rest nowhere. There are, however, few things more striking than the power that single individuals have had for good or evil all through the history

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of the race. The record of God's dealings with the world from the beginning is little more than the record of personalities of marked distinction in their relation to God and to their fellow-men. The great works have been accomplished by the "ones," and not by the multitudes. Think how Noah, in his stern righteousness, stood out from the wickedness of his age; how Abraham, and Joseph, and Moses, and Saul, and Daniel, and Nehemiah, and John the Baptist, and the Apostle Paul, each in his day, having great convictions and purposes that would not be set aside, was the force of forces in the movements of his period. How they dwarf their contemporaries, and loom above the crowd! Against the Philistines there went forth but one brave shepherd lad, with a whole-hearted trust in God. Solitary Samson delivered his people from the dominion of their enemies. Shamgar, with oxgoad for weapon, vanquished the foe. Amid the carnival of Baal-worship, Elijah alone testified for God. Almost every great religious movement has been a proof of the power of the individual to impress himself, and his views of truth upon others. Witness Arminianism, Socinianism, Calvinism, Wesleyanism, Mohammedanism—each of these the system of one man. Think of what the zeal of Luther did in Germany, of Wyclif in England, of Knox in our own land, of Hus in Bohemia, of Savonarola in Florence. Think how Peter the Hermit moved up and down Europe stirring kings and nobles and the common people to espouse the cause

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of the Crusades. "Their persistence urged man's search to vaster issues." The old heroic type of robust Christian individuality is rarer now than it once was, which says with Athanasius—If the world goes against God, then I go against the world. Science tells us that the atoms of matter do not really touch each other. They only approach within a certain distance. There the attraction ceases, and an invisible something holds them apart. So we have a separate existence distinct from others. We have a personal relation and responsibility to God. This responsibility is individual; that is, it is not divided—it is not divisible. There is no partition of the responsibility, no escaping its full burden. We are in our souls, solitary. We live a single life before God; we are "gathered one by one." The statement and illustration of three things will sufficiently prove this.

*1. We are gathered into the kingdom of God  
"one by one."*

Sin is a personal thing. Condemnation, which is inevitably connected with it, is a personal thing, and salvation is a personal thing. Men are not saved in masses. Thousands may be converted, as on the day of Pentecost; but it is through individually repenting and turning to the Lord. Not that there is a uniform type of soul-history in conversion. There is no fixed order through which every sinner must pass on his way to

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saintship. That is, we cannot insist upon an unvarying sequence in the emotions recognised as constituting a genuine experience—such as deep conviction of sin, the sense of sin unbearable, struggles after peace, tears, cries, bitter laments, suddenly light breaking in upon the soul, and the conscious sense of pardon. We must recognise the variety of the Spirit's operations in the souls of men. In our great guide book for the work of evangelisation—the Acts of the Apostles—we have, in one chapter, an account of two conversions in one city—that of Lydia, and of the jailor of the prison, at Philippi. But the manner of these was very different. Lydia was led in a gentle, gradual way, without any violent feelings; whereas the emotions aroused within the jailor were intense. The earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison seemed to have shaken his soul also. Some are consciously converted suddenly. They can fix the hour and place and all the attendant circumstances of their new birth. They can point to the very arrow of truth that pierced the heart, and to the precise sermon or prayer or word or act that brought the healing balm. But if some people are ignorant of their birthday, they may yet be sure they are alive. The day of salvation has dawned upon them; a faint gleam of thoughtfulness grew into earnestness, into penitence, and enlarged into a fuller sense of the soul's need of Christ. As they drew towards Christ, the ruddier hues of hope appeared; there were flushes of joy. The night of unbelief had ended, and the day of

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grace had begun. "I have come to the conclusion," said a very intelligent Christian, "that it is at least best for me that I have never been able to fix the exact time of my conversion. I am afraid I should trust too much to it if I could. Now I trust to nothing but continued faith in Christ and fellowship with Him." The children of Christian parents, dedicated to the Lord in infancy, with every influence of heredity and home training telling in favour of faith and obedience, may be expected early, and almost insensibly, to yield their hearts to Christ and bear His image, without so distinct a sense of enmity to God and so terrible a conflict as may be expected by others. Child piety is to be expected under Christian nurture, rather than the coming back at a later stage by painful steps to the point where they were long before—entering the Kingdom as a little child. But in every case we should be able to say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." For there is a danger of our having low and inadequate views of what Christian life is. There would not need to be so much said of a Higher Christian Life, of the deepening of spiritual life, if that were not so. A measure of seriousness, of thoughtfulness, there may be, without the heart and life being given up to God. Hereditary privilege does not make a Christian, nor, in itself, religious training, nor the observance of any rites. These may be the means, they are not the motive power. There must be the gracious illumination of the Holy Spirit revealing Christ as

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the only Saviour. There must be the bending of the will, and the yielding of the whole soul. There is nothing less than a new life, new aims, new hopes, new joys. All must be new.

You have seen a crowd pressing around the place of entrance, and when the doors were opened and the people went streaming in, if you were in the crowd you would be borne in by the mere pressure of those behind and around. But none have ever thus entered the Kingdom of God. You enter there as if alone—"one by one." The door of it is low—one of those turnstiles which admit only one through at a time. All must have personal dealing with the Lord Himself. And what encouragement there is to this! He glorifies Himself in counting one by one. To us, large numbers alone seem to have importance. To Him one is of infinite importance. The Lord Jesus turned out of His way to meet individual sinners. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is largely the story of individual believers seeking individual sinners—Peter going to Cornelius, Philip going to the Ethiopian eunuch, Ananias going to Saul of Tarsus. "Reaching the masses" is a shallow, irreverent phrase if it does not mean personal exertion on behalf of individuals. The soul is too great, too complicated in the solitude of its indestructible life, to be dealt with in crowds. Christ died for each, as if he died only for one. The Eternal Spirit seeks to dwell, in the fulness of His Majesty, in each spirit. Heaven has its myriads of saved sinners. They were "gathered one by one."



## THE SINGLENES OF LIFE.

2. *We are gathered into the school of Christ  
"one by one."*

The Divine love is a distinguishing personal thing. So is our individual spirit-life. Have we a vivid realisation of Divine truth? Have we obeyed the imperious demands of conscience? Have we yielded to the pressure of obligation to God? These things are not once for all. They become abiding experiences as the character is moulded to the will of God. The Lord said to us at the first, "Come unto Me." Now He says, "Follow thou Me," "Learn of Me." All the way from the Cross of Calvary to the crown of life there is carried on a course of instruction, of discipline, by which we are trained for higher service and enjoyment. We may learn much from the experience of others. We can increase our wisdom by considering the follies of others. We can avoid mistakes by remembering the blunders that others have made. We can make our success more certain by a careful study of the causes of another's failure. But we assuredly learn most by the experiences that are personal to ourselves. And there is such personal dealing with us by the Great Master Himself. He deals with us individually as really as He dealt with Nicodemus who came to Him by night, or with Matthew at the receipt of custom, or with the woman of Samaria at the well, or with the man who was born blind, or with Mary at the sepulchre. He deals with us in our particular circumstances and

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surrounding. He has made these to be the fittest possible for our spiritual nurture and growth. We may perhaps have admired some wild blossom by the wayside, and transplanted it to the shelter and richer ground of our own garden. But it drooped and faded, the reason being that it was adapted to, and required for its vigorous growth the very poverty of its native soil and the buffetings to which it was exposed. Not all are fitted for, or profit by, a life of luxury or exaltation. Many grow up amid sore trials and afflictions. Their life is a desert-wandering with its weariness and want. But all is needful, the weakness, the solitude, the pain. Strength and victory spring from these like harvest from the well-ploughed field. We are instructed "one by one," for experiences vary as do the faces of men. We may be members of one household, our surroundings and privileges the same; yet are our gifts and capabilities diverse. Especially when we suffer—and the school of affliction is a large part of Christ's school—do we realise our solitariness. The most tender sympathy cannot reach the seat of suffering, the centre of anguish where there is the throbbing of intensest pain. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger—even the dearest friend—cannot intermeddle with its distress. Alone we must pass through all the deeper and more solemn exigencies of life—alone, yet not alone if He is with us whose rod and staff comfort us.

3. *We are gathered to our fathers "one by one."*

## *THE SINGLENES OF LIFE.*

"We come like shadows, so depart." We are like waves which chase each other and break upon the shore.

"Our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still like muffled drums are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave."

This is the fact which can in no wise be reasoned out of human history. Over the shoulder of the worldling and sceptic there leers the grim, ghastly spectre of death. We were born to die. "And he died," is the last brief record regarding all. Men may have amassed wealth almost beyond computation, or they may have filled the world with the fame of their discoveries. They may have done much that makes the names of mortals great. But with all that, the story of their life comes at last to the bald epitaph—"He died." The obituary notices of the daily press are an impressive reminder to men as they glance at the news of the day, scan market prices, and mark rise or fall of stocks, that their names will at length appear there. We may escape the wasting ravages of disease, but not the grasp of death. No pleading, no resistance, no entreaties avail when we are brought face to face with the last enemy. Every old man can remember many friends of youth who have been taken "one by one"; and the commonplace "All must die" is transforming itself into the acute consciousness, "I must die, and soon." The eye is already dim and the ear is waxing dull, the hand is becoming less nimble, the feet are

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dragging wearily. Soon the noise of the busy world will roll past unheard. The links that bind to fellow men will be broken up and shattered. In the Museum of the Capitol at Rome I looked upon the well-known figure in marble of the dying gladiator. He lies sunk on the sand, the head damp with the dews of death, the forehead wrinkled in pain, the eye sunken in hopelessness, the mouth parted in dying agony and stiffening into eternal silence. There is a look upon his face of utter unconsciousness of all around. He is far beyond thinking or remembering. In that moment the soul is gathered into itself and neither hears nor sees. The outer world is nothing to him whether it rave or pity. Love and hate, memory and hope, have ebbed out of the heart with the life blood. A moment or two more and he will be dead. But not even then will he be more utterly isolated than he is now. The sense of the loosening of our hold upon the world, which precedes the awful separation from it, smote upon the heart of the old sculptor, and has diffused over his work such reverent, solemn, pitying grace as thrills those who look upon it. It is an unconscious utterance of the cry, "Alas we die alone!" To the very verge our friends may accompany us. They may bend over us, they may cling to us; but that one long wave from the sea of eternity washes up to our lips, sweeps us from the shore, and we are alone. We cannot (as one has lamented) keep the members of the flock together till some spring day when, amid the bright sunshine and the singing of the

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birds, we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, and go through the flood hand in hand. Fathers and mothers would sometimes fain gather their children together and say, "Now Jesus calls us, we must go"; put their little ones to rest saying "Sleep now the last sleep"; and then go and lie down with the gently whispered, "Master, we are all ready!" But this is not the way. It is "one by one"—"one by one"; and it may be suddenly, before any farewell can be uttered.

Is the thought, "I must die," one from which we shrink, because we fear to enter a world for which we are not prepared? And why not ready? To those who live unto the Lord, death is assured gain. It is a passage from a prison to a palace. On this side we are captives, but there freed men; on this side we are exiles, but there citizens; on this side we are orphans, but there children at home. Here we are disguised and unknown, there disclosed and proclaimed as the sons of God.

"They are gathering homeward from every land one by one;

As their weary feet touch the shining strand one by one,  
Their brows are enclosed in a golden crown,  
Their travel-stained garments are all laid down,  
And clothed in white raiment they rest on the mead,  
Where the Lamb loveth His chosen to lead—one by one."



## The Divine Gentleness.

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“Thy gentleness hath made  
me great.”—*Psalm xviii. 35.*

IT is the greatness of God which David celebrates in this Psalm. He refers, indeed, to his own greatness, but only that he may ascribe all to the love and kindness of the Lord. He admits that he is a made man, but he never claims to be a self-made man. A self-made man is sometimes (in irony) said to be inclined to worship his maker. David is never guilty of such idolatry. He had been raised from a humble position to one of greatness. The overruling authority of God had chosen and called him from the sheepcote to the throne. He was the uncrowned king, while Saul was still wielding the sceptre. The Lord had trained him for the position he was to occupy, making him at once a shepherd who should feed, and a captain who should lead, His people Israel. The divine presence was promised to his entire life; and God's faithfulness did not fail. He threw the shield of His power over him. He

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succoured and consoled him amid the perils and privations of his earlier years. With a mighty arm He swept aside all obstacles and established him in the place of dominion. He upheld his broken spirit under the blow of ungrateful rebellion, and gave him gracious deliverance from it. Truly he could say—"Thy gentleness hath made me great." As man came from the Divine hand, he was great—great in capacity, great in opportunity, great in prospect. Now, through the power of indwelling sin, it is but greatness in ruins. He needs to be restored by a divinely-wrought process. Greatness can only be attained through redeeming grace. The Lord seeks to make us great in union with Himself. Some have been called great with very little reason. But no man now honours an Alexander, or a Herod, or a Napoleon, merely because "great" was once appended to his name. In course of time all such claims are sifted. Moral standards are applied, an imperial standard such as this: "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." Gentleness and greatness: the connection of the two things may not at once be apparent—the Divine gentleness and any real greatness to which we may attain. Yet their connection is, the Psalmist here says, simply that of cause and effect. Let us, in considering these words in which so much of the sentiment of the Psalm is gathered up, think, first, of the Divine gentleness, and, then, how this makes for greatness in us.

## THE DIVINE GENTLENESS.

### 1. *The Divine Gentleness.*

It is in Him who was the image of the invisible God that we see the Divine ideal. There is no doubt of His greatness. The woman at the well, surprised at the mysterious dignity of Christ's words, said—"Art thou greater than our father, Jacob?" It was He whose goings forth were of old—from everlasting, who met Jacob at Bethel and Peniel, who guided and blest him all his life through, who redeemed him from all evil. All other greatness has been fragmentary, imperfect, with flaws and stains. But in Christ's person, character, and achievements, greatness is complete, belonging not to earth and time, but to Heaven and eternity. Call up the vision of the world's greatness, monarchs with jewelled crowns; call up the vision of intellectual greatness, all master spirits, all thinkers of great thoughts, all speakers of immortal words; call up the vision of moral greatness, men of heroic virtues, all saintly lives, all strong, calm-browed sufferers; call up the vision of Heavenly greatness, bright Seraphim, spirits that bear victorious palm. These all pale before the greatness of Him who, because He is God, reveals the Infinite and Eternal One. All greatness bows the knee and does Him homage. But the Son of God exemplified also the qualities of meekness and gentleness. The gods of the heathen are deities of blood and iron, raining down thunderbolts, and taking swift revenge upon their foes. The whole



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mythology of paganism does not contain one example of the gentler virtues. Even love to Him was storm-swept passion. Mohammed taught that God was merciful, but only to the true believer. He had no conception of the kindly Father whose tender mercies are over all His works. But how beautifully is the idea of the Divine greatness allied with gentleness brought out in the words—"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars. He calleth them all by their names." Think of it! The hand which marshals the stars laying balm on the wounded heart of man. Almost in the same breath the prophet speaks of Him who hath "measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance;" and says, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom." Here is the same thing again: "The everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary, giveth power to the faint." And yet again: "The High and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity and its praises, dwells with the man who is of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at His word." There are sentences in this Book of God that smite like a two-edged sword. There are words that burn like fire. It must be so, because of the evil that abounds

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in this world. The Divine love is as lightning that reveals the abysses that yawn before us. It is also sunlight to gladden our hearts in the heavenly way. The Lord's great power is allied to infinite gentleness. He works for us mightily, but He works for us tenderly. Can we fail to see how the Lord Jesus Christ revealed the gentleness of God? Crowds of diseased and helpless, of sick and sorrowful ones, who thronged the way wherever He went, knew how the tenderness of His words was united to the gentleness of His deeds. No kind of misery did He willingly pass by. The weary and heavy-laden met Him, and in accents of pity He bade them come unto Him and He would give them rest. His was not a heart that reproached the sinner, casting up his sins to him, and stinging him by the remembrance of them. He drew with the cords of love, and purged the memory as truly as the conscience. Even when He dealt with enmity against God, and that flamed out against Himself also, there was in His severest tones the gentleness of God. Rightly read, that terrible chapter with its reiterated "Woe unto you" is a merciful appeal to the insensate conscience to quicken it into action. It is followed by a burst of holy grief, when from the green slopes of Olivet there flashed at once into full view the guilty city that killed the prophets and stoned those that were sent unto it, and was soon to fill up the measure of iniquity by crucifying the Lord of glory. In the midst of rejoicing hosannas, Jesus wept!

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But to set forth this gentleness we would need to rehearse the whole life of the Son of Man, from the moment when the Holiest stooped to the lowest place, till that dark hour when He offered Himself for the sin of the world. The light that shines from the Cross of Calvary is the light of the gentleness of God. Yea, on the Mount of Ascension, when the hallelujahs of heavenly welcome were already sounding in His ears, how tenderly He breathed His farewell to His disciples, the last vision imprinted on their memories being His hands uplifted in blessing.

*2. But how does that Gentleness make for our Greatness?*

We are apt to think of gentleness as a negative rather than a positive quality. Yet it is among the most potent in the universe. Gentleness is the force of forces in the material world. The law of gravitation and of evaporation, the fall of the dew, need but be referred to in proof of this. When the stoutest ships have seemed helpless in the storm, ready to be engulfed in the angry waters, the gentle flow of oil has silently and surely smoothed the ocean into placidity. Gentleness is the Lord's great dowry. When He would encourage the disheartened prophet, He showed him the force of violence and of gentleness in the workings of Providence. Behold the wind, but the Lord was not in the wind; behold the earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; behold the fire, but the Lord

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was not in the fire. After the fire, "a still, small voice." The declaration in the text of the power of Divine gentleness is the climax of the Psalmist's recital of the forces at work in the earth—floods, earthquakes, hailstones, lightning, whirlwind. Above all these comes the crowning force of gentleness. It does not consist merely in sweetness of disposition and kindly patience. Its defining quality is rather the use of persuasive measures in order to gain, than of coercive measures in order to crush. How easy for God to drive His purposes straight through, and tread His foes beneath His feet. He does not come with violent onset, and storm the citadel of man's unwilling heart. He lays gentle siege, and waits for willing surrender. He does not exalt Himself at the expense of man. He has chosen to exalt Himself in man. He does not crush the will, but ennoble it, that He may raise us to the heights of loving obedience and holy felicity. How wonderfully patient and considerate He is in awakening us from our spiritual slumber! You who are wise parents, know that in dealing with your children, you must seek to adapt yourself to the nature and temperament of each. How do you waken them in the morning? One is a boy who runs and plays, till at night he is thoroughly tired out. When he falls asleep he seems almost as insensible as a stone. You are obliged to shake him with a certain sort of violence. But you do not hurt him. You have another boy, pale-faced, and blue-veined in the forehead. You

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wish he could sleep more soundly. All you have to do to waken him, is to open the shutters and let in the sunshiny brightness of the morning. And you have, perhaps, a child of quite a nervous temperament. Waked suddenly, he is out of sorts half the day. So you steal in quietly and let a kiss fall upon his lips, and his arms go round your neck as if he had just been dreaming about you. And as for the babe, he seems to be roused by the merest look into his face. And spiritual awakening proceeds with like regard to individual constitution and characteristic—always gentle, even when it appears most forcible. Some strong natures may be aroused by nothing less than the hurricane and the earthquake. Some sensitive souls need only that the light of truth shine upon them. Some are awakened by the overpowering sense of the Lord's favour and kindness towards them, and some are brought to a sense of sin by a Divine look. God does not produce convictions of sin half so often by accusations of specific transgressions, as by setting these sins in the light of His countenance. He suggests the remedy, applies it with solicitous consideration. When Paul saw the vision of God throned on high, the conviction of Divine holiness awakened in him conviction of his own sin. And the remedy came in the same gentle manner. A seraph at the Divine bidding flew and touched the prophet's lips. How expressively we find the Divine touch is referred to. The hollow of Jacob's thigh was only touched. If worse pedestrian, better pilgrim.

## *THE DIVINE GENTLENESS.*

Our Lord touched the leper, the eyes of the blind man, the sick maiden. There was life in the touch. But have we not read of pain and wrestling in the awakening of the spiritual life? Assuredly. But the fire is not in the violence of the steel, it is in the hardness of the flint. Divine grace is gentle. But if the heart of man be set to do evil; this it is which makes friction and conflict. Not every experience is embodied in the quiet surrender of the words, "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." In its commencement, spiritual life is often as feeble as the bodily life of the child—a spark which (it may seem) a breath of wind could extinguish; weak as a bruised reed, which the slightest pressure will break; uncertain as a flax which smokes, but has not burst into flame; tender as the blade when first it is visible above the soil. But how gently does God deal with such. How gradually does He shed light on the opening mind. How patiently does He bear our murmuring and despondency, our failures and our falls. Little by little, He teaches, refines, and sanctifies, leading us on step by step and stage by stage, suiting the burden to the strength and the strength to the burden. We are dependent on that Divine gentleness all through the course of this life. It is that gentleness which permits, yea, which enjoins, us to take hold of His omnipotence. When we are without spot in His presence, it will be His gentleness that we shall adore and praise. Surely

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the gentleness of the past is the pledge for the future.

And if God thus deals with us, may we not thus learn to be gentle one with another? "I beseech you," said Paul, "by the gentleness of Christ." This motive lifts us above the common standards of humanity. Jesus Christ has been called "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." To be followers of Him is to be made superior to ruder impulses. In dealing with the proud and haughty Hindoos, Henry Martyn, as many another, learned that it is the power of gentleness which alone is irresistible. It may be likened to the flame of the lamp which noiselessly fills the room with light; to the carpet, soft and deep, which has not only a look of ample comfort, but deadens every creaking sound; to the curtain that wards off the summer's glow and the winter's wind; to the pillow on which weariness lays its head and forgets its misery. The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness. Let us so receive of the Spirit of God that He will work out in us this grace also. In communing with the gentle God we cannot but grow into His likeness, as the stream, when it widens out for entrance into the sea, flows smoothly and reflects the sky overhead. Gentleness is the beginning of immortal greatness.

Dropped in the heart's deep well,  
The good, the joy which it may bring  
Eternity shall tell.

## "I Have Somewhat to Say unto You."

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"And Jesus answering said unto him, "Simon I have somewhat to say unto thee." And he saith, "Master, say on."—*Luke vii. 40.*

SIMON had invited Jesus to sit at meat with him. His motive does not seem to have been anything greater than the desire to know more of this prophet, who, by His healing power, as well as by His wonderful teaching, had arrested the attention of the people; who had also aroused feelings of jealous alarm in the leaders of the Jewish Church. His friendship for Jesus was at best cold and hesitating. The hospitality accorded Him was evidently meant to be qualified, for the ordinary attentions paid to an honoured guest, were, in the case of Jesus, conspicuously wanting. But if there be any doubt of Simon's motive in desiring the presence of Jesus, there is none in regard to the Saviour's motive in accepting the invitation. He went in the spirit of one who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." On a previous occasion He sat down with despised



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publicans at a feast given by a publican. Now He humbled Himself still more by sitting down with a proud, suspicious pharisee. It was quite in keeping with the usual custom that others than those invited at meal time should come in unchallenged, and either occupy places along the side of the room, or go up and speak with the guests as they reclined at table. So this woman hesitated not to come in and stand behind Jesus. His ineffable love was continually drawing to Him the hungry-hearted and soul-needy. They found sympathy in Him. He listened patiently to their story. He was as gentle to the outcast sinner as to the honourable Nicodemus. No matter who reached out a hand for help, He was ready to lay hold of it. This woman evidently had seen Jesus before. She may have mingled with the crowd of publicans and sinners that drew near to Him when He said—"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost." The words may have passed like a ray of light into her darkened soul, her faith grasping the promise they contained, and rejoicing in the hope thus held out to her. Now, at least, she came with a tribute of gratitude—her alabaster box of ointment, very precious, to pour upon His feet. The tears that rained down her cheeks she could not restrain, but, as they fell on His feet, she wiped them away with the tresses of her hair. And Jesus prized this heart-felt offering of the despised sinner more than the costly hospitality of his self-righteous host. Simon saw

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only the surface of the occurrence, and was unmoved by the spiritual emotions of the woman. His scorn deepened into indignation against Jesus, and he began to recall in his own mind the favourable judgement which he had before passed upon Him. He could not conceive of Holiness willing to come into contact with that which is impure. He thought not how the Physician must touch the loathsome sore in order to heal it. It did not seem possible that Jesus might know all, and yet allow this to take place. Jesus knew what the pharisee did not know. He saw into the woman's heart, and perceived the penitence which was there, the bitter sorrow for sin, the hatred of past ways, the desire to begin a new life. And He was ready to save her although she had a stained name and a tarnished soul. The humble penitent was near to the kingdom of God, the haughty pharisee was still far from it. Simon thought he had seen through his guest, and found Him out. But he soon found that Jesus had seen into his heart. "Simon," our Lord said—"I have somewhat to say unto thee," and then by a parable led him to make the confession which was really a condemnation of himself—that they who are forgiven most, may well love most. It lies beyond our present purpose even to sketch the sequel of the story. We concentrate attention upon the words of our text as suggesting to us truths of unfailing importance, and of appropriate application to ourselves, and this in connection with Christ's call upon our attention and the fitting response.

*"I HAVE SOMEWHAT TO SAY UNTO YOU."*

*1. Christ's call upon our attention.*

To us He says, "I have somewhat to say unto thee." His words are based upon His perfect knowledge of us, even of our unuttered thoughts. He interprets silence as though it were speech. He knows us as we are, not as we seem to others, or are supposed by them to be. There are no barriers of concealment we can raise between Him and the sanctity of our being. All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Therefore it is that He calls for our personal attention. He has a word for each of us, as well as a word for all. He knoweth the sheep by name, and leadeth them out. It is said to us as to Mary of Bethany, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." It has been stated of more than one great general that the secret of the power which he exercised over his soldiers was largely due to the minuteness and accuracy of his acquaintance with them. His influence upon them in the mass was in the measure of his knowledge of them personally. So it is in an infinite degree with Christ. He would not be the Saviour our hearts crave had He not personal knowledge of, and individual interest in, us. His general providence involves a particular providence in regard to each one of us. Was not that one reason why God became incarnate, that we might believe in His particular and personal love? We know how the Lord Jesus suited His words and dealings to the circumstances of men. He determined His

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journeyings in one direction or another that He might come into contact with some one that He knew needed, or was seeking His help. He (for example) singled out the poor woman, who, in fear and trembling, touched the hem of His garment, not suffering her to be lost in the crowd, calling for her personal attention, giving her personal healing, and leading her to make a personal confession. He turned to the two disciples who followed Him and said, "What seek ye? Come and see." He found Philip and said, "Follow Me." He beheld the publican, Levi, at his usual place of occupation and said unto him, "Follow Me." He appeared to the most deeply sorrowing woman at the empty sepulchre and revealed Himself in abundant consolation, calling her by name. And now that He is on the other side of the veil, His knowledge is not less minute, full, divine, than it was in the days of His flesh. All that He does is in view of our circumstances and need, perfectly known to Him. The more we thoughtfully study the course of the Divine dealings with us, the more we shall see that this knowledge is an element present in them all, making us recipients of appropriate blessings, and objects of timely deliverances.

*2. Then, again, notice how Christ speaks in the language of loving tenderness, "I have somewhat to say unto thee."*

He might demand attention. He condescends to seek it. He could not express Himself in gentler terms. So it is, Christ recalls our minds

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from distraction and preoccupations to the quietness that enables us to give heed to His instructions. When some word of Scripture comes as a message to our souls, it is Christ making the lamp of truth to shine with living radiance. When this truth is declared through the living voice of another, we know it is Christ using this means of reaching our hearts. Without the inspiration of Christ, the efforts of the most eloquent are as ineffectual as a bow without an archer, a pen without a writer, a harp without a hand to sweep its cords. But He has a word exactly suited to us, whatever our necessity may be. When we are yet dead in trespasses and sins, He comes to awaken in us conviction of our guilt; to give us heartfelt hatred of sin, and heartfelt desire to keep God's commandments; to reveal our need of a righteousness infinitely greater than our own; to reveal the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness—the peace which is ours through the blood of the Cross. When the pleadings of the world are still asserting their charm, or when we are beginning to feel their falseness, Christ comes saying, "I have somewhat to say unto thee." "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto Me, hear and your soul shall live." Not only does He go forth to welcome us when we are yet afar off, He it is who has prompted within us the resolve—"I will arise

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and go to my Father." He comes to us when we are groaning under the crushing burden of care. His words are as a strain of sweet music as He invites us to cast our care upon Him, and straightway we find it is better for us to be strengthened for the heavy burden than to have it lightened or removed. When the first love has grown cold, our faith become weak, our self-denial become faint, our humility become threadbare, our prayers formal; when sacred duties in which we once rejoiced have slipped from our hands unperformed; when we have ceased to fix our eyes on the prize of the high calling, the Lord comes to us saying, "I have somewhat to say unto thee. Return unto Me and I will heal your backslidings. I will love you freely." When the dark shadow of bereavement creeps over us, when we sit alone nursing our sorrow, finding nothing to cheer us in view of the terrible triumph of death, Jesus Himself says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." When times of sore trial come upon us, and arrest is laid upon life's purposes, the words of Jesus come soft and clear, "Be still, and know that I am God." "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." At all times we may hear His quickening, correcting, directing voice. We may not be conscious of a direct communication from God, but in the depths of our being, deeper than the region of feelings and impressions, we are

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persuaded we ought to do this, or refrain from doing that, to go on in a certain course, or stop short. This is not the suppression of our individuality. It is the awakening and the energising of our divinely given powers. And we shall be preserved from falling into mere mysticism or false spirituality as we cherish implicit confidence in the will of God concerning us, and are lovingly ready to obey His Word.

*3. And, now, notice briefly the fitting response to this call upon our attention, "Master, say on."*

The very possibility of mistaking or neglecting the Divine voice, makes life a critical thing. We are much more likely to be wanting in spiritual discernment than to fall into the snare of superstition. The natural impulse of the mind is to make itself the standard, allowing partial knowledge, or prejudice, or passion, rather than principle, to draw conclusions. But our fitting response is, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "Master, say on." (1) There is here the acknowledgement of Christ's authority as teacher. Jesus is Master. Men speak of those who have stood out prominently in art or letters, as masters, influencing generations still through the works of genius they have left, or the schools of thought they have founded. Who will dispute the title of Master to Euclid in geometry; to Plato in philosophy; to Demosthenes in eloquence; to Raphael in painting; to Michael Angelo in sculpture; to Handel in

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music; to Calvin in theology, whether their pre-eminence be granted or not. But Christ is Master in the most absolute sense. He has not only accomplished, through His death, eternal redemption for a lost world; He is the great Revealer as well as the great Redeemer. He is our one authority in regard to the great mystery of life here and hereafter. He has spoken to us words men never uttered, nor could have uttered before. It is sometimes said, "Thus saith antiquity, criticism, reason, experience." These are but idols, defiling the temple of God if they contradict or usurp the place of Christ. We may listen to the views of great thinkers with the respect due to them as men, but we seek "the mind of the Master" as the mind of God. Our spiritual education is entrusted to no created being. If the servants of God speak a word that enlightens any mind, or cheers any heart; if they have helped to dry up any tears, it is because they have first received and learned from the great Master. They are not "voices," only echoes. While the servant speaks let our prayer be, "Master, say on." Master is a glorifying title. It implies the obligation to receive what He teaches without misgiving, without gainsaying, to do what He commands without reluctance. We can never get into a spiritual frame of mind for which this confession is a word too cold. (2) But this response is also the expression of our willingness to give heed to Christ's instructions. "Master, say on." Such words may be spoken sullenly.



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as one who thinks he cannot escape reproof. They may be spoken repiningly, as one who thinks himself hardly dealt with. But they may also be spoken eagerly, as one who joyously expects words of guidance and cheer. Christ's voice should ever fill us with solemn awe and delighted expectation. It should command the profound obedience of our souls. How life would be beautifully simplified if we but recognised that for us there is no choice but the Master's choice, no path but such as He has made, no aim but such as He has directed. By constant reference to Him there comes into our hearts a consciousness of His presence and power, so that we know and rejoice in His will concerning us. Amid all the difficulties and dangers, the perplexities and interruptions of life, we know ourselves in the hands of Him who is the wisdom of God. So we can go on unfearingly, unflinchingly.

Are we not then desirous that Christ should still "say on," that He should lead us to higher heights of spiritual knowledge and experience? What is His will? but that ours should be a life of sure and steady ascent, as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It can only be this as we continually give heed to His words. This is the great obstacle to our progress, that we suffer ourselves to remain in ignorance of so much that He has spoken, that we allow so many of His precepts to become for us obsolete. The word of God does not dwell in us richly. Great truths are not held

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with a firm grasp. "If a man love Me," said Christ, "he will keep My words." What have we yet learned compared with what Christ is willing to teach us? Upon how much have we acted of what Christ has spoken to us? Has His teaching gone down into the deep places of our hearts? Christ is surely uttering our name to-day. He is saying to each one of us here, "I have somewhat to say unto thee." What do you think He wishes to say? Does conscience whisper regarding some culpable forgetfulness; some greivous shortcoming; some repeated unfaithfulness; some spot upon our spiritual garment? Is there not something about us we know cannot please Him? And He knows it, and would in His own gentle way speak to us of it. Shall we not hush our hearts to hear His voice, in reverence and contriteness and submission answering, "Master, say on?" Is there some apparently hard duty, some called-for sacrifice from which we yet shrink? He would remind us of it that we may arise and do it.

"Master, say on!" Thou only hast the words of eternal life. In Thy strength we can do all things. We shall be made more than conquerors.



## Semi-Jubilee Sermon.

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“Let thy work appear unto thy servants,  
and thy glory unto their children.  
And let the beauty of the Lord our  
God be upon us, and establish thou the  
work of our hands upon us, yea, the  
work of our hands establish thou it.—  
*Psalm xc. 16-17.*”

I HAVE chosen these words this evening in preference to any others, because they are the words from which I preached my first sermon as an ordained minister in another place. And I have sometimes said to myself—“If I complete 25 years of service, I should like to preach upon them again.” What I shall say to-night will be quite independent of what I said a quarter of a century ago. Indeed, I have scarcely cared to glance over what I prepared for my opening sermon. I want to look at these words afresh to-night, to see whether they are not as appropriate a message now as they were then.

This old psalm recalls to us the far-stretching sands of the wilderness; and here there is heard a song of the desert. It breathes its atmosphere.

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It is penetrated with its awe, an awe nursed among the solemn silences, where the lonely leader watched the sunset glow over the waste. It utters the moan of the people as they turned backward from the threshold of the promised land, to renew their weary marches, until they dropped one by one. God pity us! God help us! they cried. We wander here sadly till we die. And Moses, too, shared their wanderings and their doom. The land which shone as a star in the far distance, and lit the path of his pilgrimage, was lost to him. His eye would see it. His feet would never press its sod. But his hope was deeper than his despondency. The dominant note of the psalm is hope. In the beginning of it we see man's frailty encircled by God; our little life taken up to find its dwelling place in God. And in the end of the psalm we lay hold upon that which defies all time, decay and death. In the 15th chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, we have the New Testament view of this matter, the same line of thought, but enlarged and illuminated by the light which streams from the empty grave of the risen Saviour. We are carried from one picture to another—corruption, incorruption; dishonour, glory; weakness, power; a natural body, a spiritual body; the earthly, the heavenly; mortality, immortality; till at last the dark side of life vanishes altogether, and Death is swallowed up in victory. We too, like Israel, march under command and work under restraint. We are God-led. The hills of Canaan gleam in the distance,

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touched by the light greater than that of the sun. We, like them, are guided along the common levels of life, that we may be trained for lofty privilege and service. May we not then strike the same notes of supplication?

### *1. The first is the appearing of God's work.*

The essential idea here may be illustrated in this way. There is a mass of shapeless marble; a form is imprisoned in it which the artist has already shaped in his mind, and which his hand seeks to release. As he nears the figure which his imagination has conceived, his touches become more select and tender; his last strokes remain as its finished beauty and crowning grace. So here is a rude horde of slaves to be shaped into a nation. God bore them forth with a mighty hand from their bondage. He baptized them in the cloud and in the sea, that henceforth they might walk at liberty. Marah, and Elim, and Rephidim, and Sinai were just the loving touches which He spent upon them. So Moses prayed, "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants." Let not the fruit of the painful but precious discipline be lost. Let the living touch of Thy hand be seen upon us. And so we may well pray anew at this stage of our pilgrimage, that God may seal to us the fruit of all we have done and borne, of all the dreary trudges along the dusty highways of life; that our whole nature be full of that grace and power which grow out of strenuous toil and

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patient endurance, under the touch of the Divine hand. For this is the Divine purpose concerning us, that we should be sanctified in Christ Jesus, built up in Christ-like character. God has one design in all his dealings with us. It is to bring us, through Christianity, into closer sympathy with Him, to make us partakers of the Divine nature; that we may love what He loves, and delight in the things in which He delights. And because it is God's work we have the certainty of the completion and perfecting of Christ-like character and Christ-like work.

*2. But there is closely associated with this another note of supplication, the appearing of God's glory to their children.*

Human generations are not isolated, but are inextricably interwoven. The highest work of every age is to prepare for the next; and Moses in this psalm seizes on the sublime law, and says to God, Let us fulfil Thy purpose with us, but we ask not the full fruit for ourselves. Show to our children Thy glory. It is a pure, self-denying petition. If some of our hopes be frustrated, fulfil them to our children. If we spend our days in wandering, let our children enter into rest. The tie which binds generations to each other is the strongest as well as the tenderest thing within the wide circle of man's experience. Even our graves lift somewhat the dust of earth towards Heaven. Has God helped us to any measure of

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disciplined, fruitful, Christian manhood? It is the vantage-ground from which our children may begin, with fairer opportunity, their work in life. Opportunity is a large part of the struggle. If God has blessed us in any measure, let our church and our homes be the scene of higher culture and loftier developments than any we ventured to dream of when we were young. Let us lay up *in* our children rather than *for* them. For *having* is nothing, and *being* is all in the great account. Let God's work appear in us, and the glory shall be revealed to our children. And is there not, on the other hand, a thought here for sons and daughters? You who are the children of toils and sacrifices, remember that you have to put the crown upon your parents' lives, using nobly all the advantages which they won for you. You can scatter them in the dust and trample upon them if you will. But you can repay your parents and repay to God what He has given you by them through such toils and tears as you little dream of now, but will understand better hereafter.

*3. The third note of supplication is for the beauty of the Lord.*

To enlarge upon this would lead us too far from the main line of consideration. Suffice it to say, in so far as God's working is wrought out in us, and is unhindered by us, the result is the beauty of the Lord—that perfection which excites in those who see it, admiration and delight. In every

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saint we find something of this beauty. In one, singular faith shines out; in another, gracious meekness; in another, noble courage; in another, godly zeal, unwearying patience—all of these rays of the Divine beauty. One only is altogether lovely, glorious in holiness; but it is in Him we live, and like Him we are to become, so that upon us may rest the beauty of the Lord.

*4. The last note of supplication is for God's establishing.*

Compare that word, too, with the tone of the previous part of the psalm. By a swift transition we have left behind us the withered grass, the brief uncertain span of our numbered days, and we have found some things in this short life of ours which will abide, which God Himself will make sure, strong, and lasting. "Thy work," the psalmist said in the preceding verse. Now he speaks of "the work of our hands." Our life-work is made true, firm, abiding, when it is linked to the life and work of God, while upon us rests the beauty, the glorious majesty of the Lord our God. That beauty can be no fading beauty, cut down as the grass or withered as the morning flower. It pertains to Him who is from everlasting to everlasting. The work of our hands may seem but trivial, yet it will be worth the doing, if God crown it with His blessing. The Divine establishing, that is the element in the case which makes the work effective. "The work



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of our hands," day by day in the way of duty! May we seek that it be established? Yes, the commonest, roughest work. We have thought, some of us, perhaps, that it seemed to be established that we must go on toiling, and seeing little good of it all. But if this prayer be one that is Divinely put into our lips, how it transforms the meanest, most wearying work, when we know God will establish it. We may well see to it, then, that however plain the work be, the materials are such as shall endure, and not those that contain in them the elements of swift decay. God will not establish that which is built on the sand, or that which is of no more solid material than hay or stubble. The end of such things is to be consumed. But that which is founded on the rock, that which is according to God's Word and God's will, shall be established.

You will expect me, I daresay, to say something before I close, this evening, regarding the period of service which I have now completed. A quarter of a century is no small portion of any life, and the first 25 years of a ministry can never be altogether repeated. A year or two before I was ordained, a wave of reviving grace had passed over Scotland, stirring not a few dry bones. A more earnest Christian tone was thus excited, which has never been altogether lost. Aggressive work was set about more energetically. Some of it was undenominational, thereby securing certain immediate advantages. But the work that has broadened and deepened has been inter-denominational, in

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which all evangelical churches have cordially joined, and of which they have reaped the fruits. There has been very evidently in these twenty-five years a drawing together of the various churches, a willingness to work together, which was less visible before. In face of the powerful evils to be overcome, it has been recognised how fatal unnecessary division in the Church of Christ is. Hence we have seen such unions in these years as those of the two Presbyterian Churches in England, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland with the Free Church, the Evangelical Union Church with the Congregational, while scarcely less important has been the federation of all the Nonconformist Churches in England. And we are on the eve of the largest and most remarkable union of all—the union of the Free Church with our own. There is a sweeter tone in religious life, which is not only welcome for its own sake, but in view of the fact that an united church alone can powerfully impress the world. Indifference to religious ordinances among the masses of the people has, it is to be feared, not been a decreasing evil in the last quarter of a century. The bonds of religious authority have been somewhat loosened, even among those who belong to the Church of Christ. If there be not less religious belief and conviction, there is less outward appearance of it in the case of many. The average standard of discipleship is still far from being the standard set up by Christ Himself. Attention has largely been directed to what may be called the æsthetics of

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religion. Church buildings are now more suggestive of the reverence which becomes the worshippers of God. The tastes of a higher culture have not been excluded from the service of the House of God. There has been a more general outflow of missionary enthusiasm excited by a truer realisation of the purpose of God concerning the world, and the sacredness of the demands of the heathen upon the Church of Christ. Woman's work for Christianity, as well as for the world, has expanded into greater bulk, and absorbed the energies of many who have devoted themselves to this, in a more single-minded and successful way. While the claims of youth to the nurture of the Church have been recognised and met as never before in the history of the world. Religious literature has made immense strides, and there are, doubtless, further advances to be made in this and every direction. Light and shade have intermingled in the past, and will in the future. But in the new century upon which we are soon to enter, there is room for cherishing the hope that we shall see greater and grander things than those which have hitherto excited our praise.

One thing I am here to testify this day, that with the broadening of views and sympathies which experience inevitably brings with it, I have never seen cause in the slightest degree to change my sense of the vital necessity of the atoning Christianity and of the quickening Spirit of God, in order to regenerate the hearts of men and win them to God. I have no other, no better

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Gospel to preach than that with which I began my ministry. I trust I may be better able to expound and apply it to heart and conscience. If the Gospel of the grace of God fails, everything fails.

In looking back I can think of one, and another, and another, and another, serving Christ in the ministry of the Gospel in this town, whose 25th year of service was very near the boundary of their allotted span. Looking over the congregation to-day, I see but a few of those who called me eleven years ago to the pastorate of this church, and of the office-bearers who interested themselves in my coming, only one or two. The exigencies of business have taken some from the district. Not a few (especially those identified with the old church) have not been suffered to remain, by reason of death. The changes of another eleven years in this church who can foretell? But shall we not look up to God with more earnestness that His work may appear to us, that what we may not be spared to receive may be reaped by our children, and that what we do in the time to come in God's name, in the spirit of the Master, in dependence upon the power of the Holy Ghost, may be established for ever?



## A Woman's Ideal of Womanhood.

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“Labour is deceitful, and beauty  
is vain; but a woman that  
feareth the Lord, she shall  
be praised.” — *Proverbs xxxi.*  
30.

IT is said that Socrates thanked God daily that he was a human being, not a mere animal; that he was a free man, not a slave; that he was a man, not a woman. The last was quite in keeping with the prevailing feeling of ancient times, that man is a lordly creature, but woman essentially weak and unimportant. But in this book we get quite a different estimate of woman. The Bible may be called a picture gallery of noble women. There is beautiful Sarah and fair Rachel, loving Ruth and tender Hannah, heroic Deborah and wise Abigail, the hospitable Shunamite, and the modest Vashti, and the faithful Esther. It sets before us the virgin mother, purest and most privileged of women, in whom was cancelled the slur cast upon woman by the sin of Eve; for if

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woman was guilty of the world's first sin, on her breast the Redeemer was nourished. This book tells how faithful women ministered to Jesus, were "last at His cross, and first at His sepulchre." It records the services of Lois, of Eunice, of Dorcas, of Lydia, of Priscilla, of Phœbe. Christianity alone has given woman her true rights. Her debt to Christ is simply incalculable. He it is who has fully emancipated her from the tyranny of human lust, and recognised the true domain of her powers and endowments. Man may have greater physical power. It would be a hazardous thing to say he has greater intellectual power, yet it is only just to say he has less power of heart.

Now, I do not know where, in all the Word of God, to find a finer picture of womanhood than in this last chapter of a book which contains so much sanctified commonsense. It is a woman's ideal of womanhood. For, though it comes from the pen of King Lemuel, it is the prophecy which his mother taught him. Her heart was tender and strong. She was intensely anxious that her son should be a good man and a good king. She sought to breathe into his soul the high ideal of life she had set before herself. Perhaps she thought of the choice he would be making of one to share his throne, and she sought to hang up such a picture of true womanhood in his mind and heart as would enable him to seek one who should correspond to it in all essential features.

The whole description is summed up in the words, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain;

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but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." An ideal of womanhood given by a woman is likely to be both truly and skilfully drawn. If a young woman wants to know if a certain man is worthy of her affection, and distrusts her own judgement, let her ask her father or her brothers. If a man wants to know whether a young woman is what he thinks her to be, let him consult his mother or sisters on the subject. That is, invoke the judgement of those who are not led astray by the glamour which one sex sometimes throws over the other. Let us then consider

*(1) The lower ideal of womanhood—gracefulness and beauty.*

Grace of manner, fairness of countenance, are external things. Yet it is almost safe to say there is no woman in the world who does not desire them, and no man who does not own their attractive power. No sensible woman, however, would desire them at the sacrifice of qualities of mind and heart. But there is no doubt as to the tremendous power of personal beauty. It is said that Charlotte Brontë protested against the invariable beauty of the heroines of fiction in her day, and declared she would write a story in which the heroine would not be beautiful, but would possess a power that would make men feel her influence. The result was "Jane Eyre." But she was compelled, in the interests of truth, to give

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her heroine wonderful eyes. There must be a visible cause for the power exercised, whether in life, or in the printed page that depicts it. But beauty is but a passing power unless it is supported by the graces of mind and heart. It may attract, but it cannot hold admiration. The greatest beauty may be made repulsive by passions that reveal the hidden sordidness of the soul. No printed page so surely bears the record of the writer's thoughts as does the face ultimately become the record of the impulses, the feelings, the whole spirit that lies within. The uncontrollable hand of time is writing its invisible and indelible story day by day, and that record cannot be contradicted.

A fair woman without discretion is likened to a jewel of gold in a swine's snout. Were the mind as free from pride, selfishness, and levity as the countenance from spots and wrinkles, she would be worthy of admiration. But what the better is an apple of its rosy skin if maggots have penetrated and devoured the heart? What feeling but that of repulsion is excited by the fair but worm-eaten fruit? And what dependence can be placed on the continuance of beauty that is merely external? The touch of disease may wither it, the sparkling eye grow dim, the blooming cheek fade, the finest form lose its symmetry, and bend beneath the weight of years. What say the poets?

"Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,  
A shining gloss that fadeth suddenly,  
A flower that dies when first it 'gins to bud."



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And another says—

“A night of fretful passion may consume  
All that thou hast of beauty's gentle bloom,  
And one distempered hour of sordid fear  
Print on thy brow the wrinkles of a year.”

And still another says—

“He that loves a rosy cheek,  
Or a coral lip admires,  
Or from starlike eyes doth seek  
Fuel to maintain his fires,  
As old time makes these decay,  
So his flames must waste away.”

Beauty, so much prized, has often proved only a mockery and a snare—a source of sorrow to its possessor. If ever the possession of beauty and female charms could have guaranteed happiness, Mary Queen of Scots might have expected it. To her has been universally ascribed the utmost beauty of countenance and elegance of form. No one could behold her without admiration. Yet this very beauty proved one of the causes of her ruin. “Ah! what a life were this, gay ladies, could it last for ever,” said John Knox, when he visited her court, and beheld her brilliant circle. Behind the scene there lurked the scaffold and an ignominious death. A few more years and the young and beautiful queen bent her head beneath the executioner's axe.

Josephine, the wife of Napoleon, was also distinguished for her personal charms and her

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devotion to the pleasures of the world. She, too, found them delusive, saw her regal power dissolve like a vision, and died of a broken heart. All who have read the life of Lord Nelson know the great influence which Lady Hamilton acquired over him. She was distinguished above, perhaps, every woman of her age for her personal beauty. Her accomplishments were scarcely inferior to her beauty. She was not only a woman of the most fascinating manner, but she had exquisite taste, and her features could express every emotion by turn. Her friendship was sought for by the highest in the land. The world lay at her feet. Yet after the death of Nelson she was deserted by those who had fawned upon her. She gradually became impoverished, and died in a wretched lodging in Calais. Her property consisted only of a few pawn tickets. Her body was put into a common deal coffin without any inscription, and she was buried as a pauper.

I shall only further remind you of Lady Hester Stanhope, the niece of William Pitt, who was the favourite minister of George III. She was flattered by royalty, and excited the admiration of the poet, painter, and sculptor. By-and-by her lofty visions faded, and in the evening of life she was forsaken by her friends and burdened by pecuniary difficulties. She became the very picture of despair. "Look on me," she would say, "what a lesson I am against vanity. Look at this arm, once so rounded, now so thin that you may almost see through it. My neck was once so fair that a

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pearl necklace scarcely showed on it. Men would say to me, 'You are one of Nature's favourites.' What would they say if they could behold me now, with my beauty all gone, and long lines on my face?" Such was the comment of the once famous beauty.

"Dost thou not know  
That, of all fickle Fortune's transient gifts,  
Favour is most deceitful?"

"'Tis a breath  
Which hangs upon a smile! A look, a word,  
A frown, the air-built tower of fortune shakes,  
And down the unsubstantial fabric falls."

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain."

### (2) *The higher ideal of womanhood.*

"A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." To fear the Lord is the Old Testament phrase for practical godliness—the pursuit of a line of conduct that is in accordance with the word and will of God. But it is not the fear that is afraid of God—only afraid to offend Him. It is the fear of admiration and love; the fear which has a perfect conviction of the goodness and wisdom of God; which says, "If God has done this, it is not for me to wish it had been different." It is a holy fear which seeks to do nothing which would cause the Divine displeasure, or raise a suspicion of loyalty to God. It renders the obedience which may imply no small measure of

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self-denial, and with strong confidence that God has some gracious meaning in demanding it. Dr. Arnold once described a brave man as one who feared God thoroughly, and who feared no one else. That is true courage, which has only the fear of displeasing God. Everything noble in life springs from such a fear of God. You cannot build a character without it. The fairest form, the brightest intelligence, without it, is only a meteor that will fade and perish. The fear of the Lord derives fresh supplies of grace from the Redeemer. It unites the energies of the spiritual life to corresponding outward activities. The fountain of life is open to those who fear the Lord, and its streams energise their hearts.

Now, in the long run, the only woman who will retain her attractiveness is the godly woman who fears the Lord. I can see how it is comparatively hard for men, some men especially, to become religious; hard for those whose wills have been made stern by encounters in the daily struggle for existence, who possess the pride of manhood, to become as little children (the necessary condition of entering into the kingdom of God.) But there is something monstrous about a godless woman. Even men who do not profess much religion, look for that piety in woman which softens and elevates every natural grace of the person. The elements of character can only be harmonised by devotion to Him who is altogether lovely. The cold and careless heart of a woman is a harsh discord among the sweet harmonies of the world.

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It is like a voiceless bird, a motionless brook. A woman with her naturally delicate sensibilities, and pure instincts, and dependent nature, cannot ignore the Christ of God, cannot shut out from her heart the radiance of the Divine light and the Divine love, without producing an impression of incongruity and unfitness. It is a woman's society that soothes the world after a day of toil and anxieties. It is a woman into whose arms young immortals are placed, that is called to assuage the sorrows of childhood, and minister to the poor and distressed. Can any woman think that, out of the resources of her own poor heart, she can supply all the manifold demands made upon her; that she has light and hope and consolation and patience sufficient even for her own soul's wants, while maintaining the ministries to which she is appointed? You can no more do it than a bird can fly without wings! If Divine guidance and support be necessary to any in this world, it is to those who are, or are to be, wives and mothers. Crowning every grace of person and mind, every accomplishment, every womanly faculty, there ought to be upon the brow, as a coronet, the fear and love of God and Christ, making her

"A spirit, still and bright,  
With something of an angel light."

Infinitely strong in its uplifting, ennobling power is the love of God in Jesus Christ. Let that love take possession of every woman's heart, and under

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its inspiration she will grow in purity and depth of character. A fashionable lady, going down to the kitchen in the evening, found one of the servants, whose night off duty it was, busily studying her Bible. "Why aren't you out enjoying yourself?" she asked. "This is enjoyment, ma'am," the girl replied. Her worldly mistress couldn't believe it, and said, "Put away that book, and go and amuse yourself." But she drew the well-worn volume closer to her. "I want something that will always last," she said. And so we all need something that will last, so that when the deceits and vanities of the world are at an end, that which endures may remain with us; for godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

I was interested in reading, the other day, of an old woman—eighty years of age—living still in the house in which she was born. Though now aged and worn, only able to hobble about leaning upon her staff, she had once been strong, and straight, and comely. She had dreamed her dreams, and planned many things which had never come to pass. She was but nine years of age when she was obliged to leave school, for there was little money at home, and much work to do. She had younger brothers and sisters to educate, and help, and start in life. She had to minister, too, to her now widowed mother. It was she who kept everything going, who was always at hand in time of emergency. She was like sunshine,

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and air, and rain, excellent gifts, but everyday things taken as a matter of course, and not calling forth any special gratitude. There was one who loved her well, and was worthy of being loved, who pleaded hard with her to unite her life with his. But duty came first; a mother, and brothers, and sisters had a claim upon her which she dared not cast off. She remembered that her father was dead, and that there was no one so well fitted as herself to keep all things right. She believed that God had laid it on her to stay at home and help her mother, and she would not go against His will. Many a night she wet her pillow with her tears. But she continued patient, industrious, unsoured in temper, turning her willing hands to whatever task came in her way. She stayed on and saw her mother's eyes closed in the last sleep. She saw all her brothers and sisters settled in life. She kept the old house open, for two generations to come back to when they wanted. She lived an unselfish and God-fearing life; and now, at fourscore (though her life had often been terribly dull) she felt so glad she had given up her own liking and tried to help others. All that she had lost, she said, had been made up to her a thousand times; and she was but waiting till the door opened and she went in to see the King.

There are not a few such beautiful idylls in our Scottish homes. And, though it may be hard to believe that he that loseth his life for Christ's sake will find it, it is true. A life that

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seems to the world to be poor, obscure, and monotonous, may yet earn Christ's great encomium, "Ye have done it unto Me." Let this be unceasing encouragement, "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."





WORDS TO THE CHILDREN.



## The Shepherd's Tower.

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“Thus saith the Lord of Hosts,  
I took thee from the shepcote,  
from following the sheep, to be  
ruler over my people, over  
Israel.”—*2 Samuel vii. 8.*

DAVID had been a shepherd boy, watching his father's flocks on the hills of Bethlehem, but God took him from this humble toil, and set him on the throne, and made him Israel's greatest king. David was not the only shepherd lad who became one of the great men of the earth. Beside the whole Cathedral of Florence, stands what is called the “Shepherd's Tower.” It is a wonderful marble edifice, beautifully sculptured, rising three hundred feet into the sunny, Italian sky. The poet Longfellow called it, “The lily of Florence blossoming in stone.” There it has stood for the last six hundred years, the grandest example, perhaps, in the world, of strength and beauty, each in the highest degree. The architect and chief sculptor of that tower was Giotto, who was once a shepherd boy, keeping his sheep on the hills of Fiesole that overlook the city. Giotto occupied

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his spare time in drawing, which he did by using a sharp-pointed stone on the surface of a flat one. He would draw his sheep, or the faithful dog that helped him so much.

One day a great painter was attracted by the boy, looked over his shoulder, and was so struck by the beauty of the shepherd lad's drawing, that he went to his father, and asked to be allowed to train him, in his own house, to be an artist. It is Giotto of whom it is told that, when asked for some proof of his skill to do certain decorative work required, he simply dipped his brush in a pot of red paint and drew a perfect circle, an almost impossible thing to do without compasses.

Giotto grew up to design this wonderful tower. Some distance from the foot of it, is a set of twenty-seven sculptured scenes, which, when I visited Florence, I am afraid I had not time to examine thoroughly. These scenes begin with the creation of man. They represent Adam digging, and Eve spinning. They picture Jubal looking out from his tent door at his flocks feeding on the plain.

One thought in our text is illustrated by Giotto, the thought that *from humble places God may call to great work*. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, 'I took thee from the sheepecote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel.'" None expected David, the youngest son of the family, to be fit for anything but to keep sheep, yet God made him a king. Elisha was taken from the plough to be a prophet.

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Peter and Andrew, James and John, were called from their fishing nets to be disciples of the Saviour. Principal Cairns was once a shepherd boy, who carried with him his book, which he studied in the spare moments which his occupation gave him. There is a ladder at the humblest door in the land, leading up to the highest point it is possible to reach, if you like to climb it.

If you are inclined to say, "I think I could do something great if only I had the chance," you may be sure you will have the chance. What is *in* one is sure to be always trying to come out. Those who can do great things, get well to the top of the ladder. There is never a crowd there. Plenty of people can do things fairly well, but only a few extremely well.

One thing you must not forget—that, if you excel others, it is by God's favour. In our text He says to David, "I took thee . . . I was with thee . . . I have made thee a great name." God did everything. What did David do? Did he do nothing? He did what God told him. He used the gifts and opportunities God gave him. Do, therefore, day by day, what God has bidden you, and what He enables you to do. Do this, and you will not fail to come to such greatness in this world as you are capable of. But to be great in the sight of the Lord, you do not need to be accounted great in the sight of the world. Those who are great in their trust in God and obedience to Him, will be sure to be accounted great in the land of immortality.

## The Great Stone Face.

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“And the Child grew and  
waxed strong in spirit.”  
—*Luke ii. 40.*

SOME of you have seen a portrait of your father or mother when a child. It seemed to you very strange. Accustomed to think of them as grown up, you can hardly fancy that they were once children like you. So we generally think of Jesus as a man; yet he was once a little child. In Him we have the one model child for all the ages of the world. Never before or since has there been any child who was sinless and spotless; who could be taken in all things as a pattern by others. What a happy home Jesus must have had with His mother, and His mother with Him—the child who never did any wrong, who never pained her by disobedience! How many a mother's heart is sore because of a wayward son or daughter!

Not long ago a friend was telling me how, on a visit to the White Mountains, in New England, he saw the Great Stone Face. On the side of a

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mountain some huge rocks are so grouped as to form a resemblance to the features of a man's face. There it is, perfectly distinct—the arch of the forehead, the nose, the lips, the chin; the whole forming a striking and wonderful countenance, at once tender and majestic in expression. I remembered a story written in connection with it.

In the valley underneath that mountain there lived a little boy called Ernest, who loved to sit and look at that great stone face for hours together: the features were so noble, the expression grand and sweet as if glowing with the love of a vast warm heart that had room for all the world. He said to his father one day, "If I were to see a man with such a face, how I would love him!" His mother told him there was a tradition that had been handed down through many generations. No one knew how it first came, unless it had been murmured by the streams, or whispered by the winds. A child should be born in that valley who should grow up to be a great and noble man, and whose countenance should have an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face. But he had not yet appeared. Ernest said, "I hope I shall live to see him."

One after another, who had been born in that valley, went out into the world and achieved a certain degree of fame—one because of the riches he gained, another because of being a great soldier, another a great statesman, another a great poet. But, though the people were anxious to

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discover in them a resemblance to the Great Stone Face, and so receive the fulfilment of the prophecy, none of them could really be said to have any striking likeness to the sublime stateliness, gentle wisdom, and broad sympathy of that face. Even though the poet had uttered thoughts that seemed almost divine, yet his own life had not been great like his thoughts.

The little boy continued to admire that wonderful countenance more than ever. He would often steal away to gaze up at it. It attracted him more and more; it became a companion to him. The story goes on to tell that he attended faithfully to his duties; he was gentle and generous, kind and helpful. Pure and high thoughts flowed from his lips, good deeds dropped from his hands. There was a peaceful and faultless majesty about him as if he had been speaking with angels as his daily friends. His words had power because they agreed with the life which he always lived. They were words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy words was melted into them. And the people began to say that Ernest was himself the very likeness of the Great Stone Face.

When I read the story, I thought this was like Jesus when He lived in the quiet valley in which Nazareth is situated, and looked up into the Great Father's face, growing gradually into the consciousness of being like God, for He was God. And we have in Christ Himself an image that we may look up to admiringly, and into the likeness



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of which we ought to grow. Jesus is set before us for our imitation.

"The Child grew and waxed strong in spirit." What is a child of spirit? Is he one who has a frown on his brow, angry words on his tongue, and who stamps his foot, and will bear no contradiction? Such a child is strong in passion, not in spirit. One is strong in spirit who is master of himself. A spirited child is not he who demands his own way, and cries till he gets it; who throws down his toys and breaks them, when he is angry; but who controls himself by what he knows to be right, who scorns to tell a lie or do a mean thing. A boy got leave from his mother to play for an hour. He was winning, but he stopped in the middle of the game. "My time's up," he said. His companions asked him to finish the game and never mind. "No," he replied, "I must go home; my mother trusts me." That was a boy of spirit.

In that strength of spirit Jesus grew. He was master of Himself. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. He was not weak and timid, but unswerving. When twelve years of age He wanted very much to stay in the temple to listen to the doctors and ask them questions. But He resisted the temptation, and obediently went back with His parents to dull Nazareth and the carpenter's shop, doing the thing that was right and not the thing that He liked. It takes strength of spirit to say "No" to temptation. Many a boy goes wrong, not because he is at heart a bad boy;

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but because he is easily led away. He has not "waxed strong in spirit."

Jesus is no longer a child, though He is as a child in sympathy. Look up to Him for strength to enable you to grow into His image, to become like Him holy, harmless, and undefiled.



## The Dying Year.

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"It is done."—*Rev. xvi. 17.*

THESE three words may often have come from the lips of each one of you. You have spoken them sometimes joyfully, sometimes very sadly. You had a hard task or a difficult piece of work given you to do. You toiled faithfully and diligently, yet you were glad at last to say "It is done." Or you had some day of great pleasure, some delightful holiday; and at the close of it you said, "I am so sorry 'it is done.'"

A hungry child eats a piece of bread and says, with a sigh, "It is done," for he is hungry still. I am sure these words were never spoken as they were on that day when the beloved disciple, in the isle of Patmos, saw sights and heard sounds more wonderful than we can rightly think of. A voice from heaven, a voice from the throne, said, "It is done." There are some things of which it can never be said "It is done." It can never be said of eternity, or the existence of God, or the life of our souls. Eternity is the life-time of God. God

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is from everlasting to everlasting. We live as long as God.

Gathered as we are on the last Sabbath of the year, I wish you to notice that it will soon be said of this year, "It is done." On Friday night, when the clock strikes twelve, you who may be awake will know that the old year has gone and a new one quietly and noiselessly taken its place. Five days, and the year will be done. You who are clever at figures may be able to tell how many hours, minutes, and seconds there still are of this old year.

When the year has gone, it will take away with it a piece of your life—take it back to God; and it will never come to you again. At the beginning of the year, we thought what a long time a year was; what a great deal we would be able to do in it. Now, as we are so near the end of it, we can think of many things we have not done that we meant to do, and ought to have done. Well, the time is short now. Whatever we mean to do must be done quickly, if at all. The remaining hours and minutes of this year will surely seem very precious to us. What a busy week this ought to be to us trying to make up for lost time.

We may think a minute of no consequence, but often the lives of men have hung upon the issue of a minute. In a storm, a vessel was driven before wind and tide, on toward a great rock on which many a ship had been wrecked. The captain stood on deck, watch in hand. Fear

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filled every heart, and made every face pale. The captain stood motionless, speaking not a word, as the vessel drifted nearer and nearer to destruction. Suddenly he cried, "Thank God! the tide has turned; we are saved. In another minute we should have been on the rocks." And he returned to his pocket his chronometer, with which he had been measuring the race between tide and time. Everyone on board realised the value of a minute.

The reason why so many hours are wasted is that we do not gather up the precious minutes. If you came upon a place where gold dust was to be found, you would not despise it; you would not say, "Unless I can find nuggets, I won't have anything." Minutes are the gold dust of time. I have heard of an errand-boy who learned two languages while walking long roads with his messages. Henry Kirk White learned to read Greek as he went to and from a lawyer's office. Elihu Burrit said he had improved his mind by taking care of odd moments.

What, then, will be the record of this year? How many opportunities it has brought us! How have we taken advantage of them? We have had opportunities of getting good—the best good. A child goes out on a spring morning and returns with a bunch of snowdrops, or primroses, or cowslips. But if every pebble in her path were a diamond or pearl, yet she brought home only fading blossoms, you would say, "Silly child, you have missed a fortune." And what has God strewn in our path? We might have gathered

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truth and heavenly wisdom, and gained in grace and goodness.

“If ye will not when ye may,  
When ye will, ye shall have nay;  
Take time, in time, while time lasts,  
All time's no time, when time's past.”

Let us make a good use of the old year while it lasts; and let us make a better use of the new year, if we be spared to see it, than we have made of this. Count your life a gift from God. It is given you to make something of; it is given you to prepare for eternity. A seed is a little thing that is to have a great future. A dew-drop is not a star; but when the sun shines upon it it sparkles and reflects the image of the sun. So may the life of each one of you be, if you give yourself to Christ now, trusting Him, and loving Him, and doing everything so as to please Him. While death will not come till God sends it, when it does come, and it is said that life is nearly done, you will fear no evil. Because, when earthly life is done, glorious, eternal, heavenly life will be begun.



## Little Foxes.

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"Take us the foxes, the little  
foxes that spoil the vines."—  
*Song of Solomon, ii. 15.*

I SUPPOSE that most of us have, at one time or another, seen a vine with its bare stem, its long, leafy branches, and in the autumn its bunches of rich, ripe grapes. In this climate vines are only grown within the shelter of a hot-house; but in the lands of the Bible, vineyards are as common as fields of wheat. They are surrounded by hedges to keep out trespassers, and especially wild beasts that would trample down the tender plants and destroy the precious fruit. But there is one enemy not easy to keep out. The fox is just as difficult to keep out of the vineyard as out of the poultry yard. You know how very sly and cunning he is, burrowing in the ground like the rabbits, but having many openings to his hole for the purpose of escape. There is no keeping "the little foxes," small as they are, out of the vineyards, for they get in by the tiny holes which it is difficult to stop up. And they injure the bark of the vines,

## LITTLE FOXES.

and suck the grapes, leaving only the worthless skin.

Now, we have a vineyard to keep. It is the vineyard of our hearts. In that vineyard there should grow the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. "The little foxes" are the little sins that steal into our hearts and spoil all that is good. Great sins are not so dangerous as little ones. Many people who would not commit a crime for which they could be put in prison, who would not be outwardly dishonest, profane, or vicious, let into their hearts and lives little sins, "little foxes that spoil the vines."

I shall speak of some of these little foxes, and, to help your memory, I shall begin at the beginning of the alphabet.

### *1. Angry Passion.*

To some hearts this little fox gets in at a bound; they are easily roused to anger. To others it gets in by gradually squeezing itself through. When a big dog makes too free with you, jumping and bounding over you, you say, "Down! go down, sir!" That is what you must say when passion rises, "Down!" else what sorrow it may cause you. Little sins grow to big sins. There was a Hindoo who brought up a young lion. It played like a kitten and seemed quite harmless. He never attempted to control it. Day by day it grew in strength, and became uncontrollable. At length,



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excited by rage, it tore its master to pieces. That is like angry passion; at first harmless, rather amusing than otherwise, in the end it is fatal. Angry passion led to the first murder. It was because he let this fox into his heart that Cain rose up in the field and killed his brother Abel.

A boy got very angry with his sister because of some trifle. That very night she died. Oh, how bitterly did he repent when too late! He longed to receive forgiveness, but he could not. The lips from which he wished to hear the words of pardon were sealed for ever. He wept, and wept bitterly, but all in vain. His tears could not wash away the memory of the angry words spoken to her whom he would never see again. Whatever is done in passion, you are likely to regret. When you are angry you cannot see right, you cannot think right, you cannot speak and act right.

Watch, therefore, against angry passion. Keep this little fox from getting into the vineyard of your heart. Two sisters were playing, when a little difficulty arose between them. The elder said to herself, "I am getting angry; I had better go away by myself for a little while." She left the room, and returned after a time with all the angry feelings gone. She had offered up a little prayer to God that He would calm her mind and enable her to fight against her naturally hasty temper. If all did as this wise sister, how many sad scenes would be avoided! When you feel anger rising in your breast, offer up a little prayer that God would give you grace to conquer it.

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### 2. *By-and-By.*

This little fox spoils much that looks promising. You have a lesson to learn, or a message to go, or a letter to write. You say, "I will do it *by-and-by*." You mean to give your heart to the Lord. Now is the right time, but you put off doing it. You say, "It will be time enough *by-and-by*." Ah! how much has been lost by putting off what can be done at once. A vessel called the *Central America* sprung a leak, and was in a dangerous condition. Another ship passed within hail, and the captain signalled for help. The answer came, "Send all your passengers and crew on board this ship." But the captain of the *Central America*, thinking his vessel might still keep afloat, sent back the message, "Lie by me till morning." The morning came, but the disabled ship was nowhere to be seen. The *Central America*, with all its passengers and crew, had gone down beneath the black waters. They were lost by putting off till to-morrow what should have been done at once.

How many put off giving their hearts to Christ till to-morrow! But to-morrow may be too late. Many a one has said, "I will give myself to Christ *by-and-by*," but *by-and-by* never came; "I will begin to serve God when I grow older," and they never grew older.

A Sabbath School teacher entered a room where a lad lay dying. He directed him to Jesus as his only refuge, and urged him to give his heart

## LITTLE FOXES.

to God. He asked him, "What shall I tell your young companions?" The lad replied, with a look and tone which the teacher never forgot, "Tell them to seek Jesus now; a death-bed is a poor place to prepare for eternity."

A minister was pondering the text, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." He dreamed that a council of evil spirits was assembled to devise means whereby they might destroy men's souls. One said, "I will go to them and say the Bible is only a fable." The others replied that that would not do. A second said, with a fiendish smile lighting up his countenance, "I will go and say that there is no God, no Saviour, no heaven and no hell." The others answered that only a fool would believe that. Suddenly one rose with a cunning leer, and said, "I will go and tell them that there is a God, a Saviour, a heaven, yes, and a hell too; but I will tell them that there is no hurry, that to-morrow is easier than to-day." And all the demons shouted, "That will do." Putting off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day, has destroyed more souls than anything else. *By-and-by* means *never*.

### 3. *Concert.*

This is another little fox that loves to creep into children's hearts and feed upon the tender grapes. Many are conceited about their dress or appearance, about what they can do or what they possess. "Don't you see how pretty I am?" said

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a child who refused to sit with others. A lady asked a minister, "May I not be fond of dress and ornaments, without being proud?" His answer was, "When you see a fox's tail peeping out of a hole, you may be sure the fox is within."

We have really nothing to be conceited about. If we are lovelier, or richer, or wiser than others, God has made us so. He gave us all that we have—beauty, possessions, strength—and all may be taken away. God giveth grace to the humble. "Learn of me," said Jesus, "for I am meek and lowly in heart."

### 4. *Deceit.*

There is no creature so artful, so deceitful, as the fox. He will even pretend to be dead, and carry on the deception so cunningly that it is not discovered until he has escaped from the danger in which he found himself. Beware of the little fox—Deceit. Be always open, truthful, straightforward, never pretending to be what you are not, never leading anyone to believe something as true which is not true, never hiding from your father or mother anything it is your duty to tell them.

One day a mother met her little daughter, whose besetting sin was deceit, coming from the garden with her hands behind her back, and said, "Didn't I tell you not to eat any more gooseberries, Elsie?" "I haven't been near the gooseberries,"

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answered the little girl; but the next minute her pockets were found full of berries. The mother led her to her own room, and talked to her very earnestly about the wickedness of deceit. "Now, Elsie," she said, "God has given you to me that I may make you a good child; when you commit such a sin, it may be because I have not done all my duty by you, so I am going to punish myself. I shall stay in my room all day, and eat no food, and pray God to keep my child from ever telling a lie again." Poor Elsie! she was very miserable. Her mother did not come down to dinner, nor to tea, and a gloom hung over the whole house. It was some time before the little girl was tempted to tell a lie again. Summer and autumn, with their flowers and fruits, passed away. One day, in the early winter, Elsie's mother grew very ill. As it began to grow dark, the little girl slipped noiselessly up to the bed where her mother lay, pale and suffering. She drew her daughter down to kiss her, and whispered faintly, "Go into the press, darling, and take an apple." Now the apples were very scarce, and the children were only allowed to have one a day. There was nothing that Elsie liked half so well as an apple, and, while her mother was speaking, the tempter whispered, "She didn't ask whether you had had one; you needn't say anything about it; that won't be a fib." But after a moment's hesitation the little girl felt that it would be a silent lie, and then she said, "I've had my apple to-day, mamma." The sick mother saw the hesitation, the look of resolution, and knew

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what a struggle it had been, and what a victory. A sweet, bright look came into her suffering face, as she whispered, "Dear Elsie, that was right; you have made me very happy." When Elsie awoke next morning, she found that deep snow had fallen, covering everything with a beautiful whiteness. She gave a little cry of delight, but it was checked by the sound of sobbing. With a pang at her heart, she slipped out of her bed, and ran in her little bare feet to her mother's room. The bed was empty and desolate, and the child stood shivering and bewildered, until her father came, and, wrapping her in a shawl, carried her to another room. There, on a white-draped couch, lay the precious mother, as cold and white and still as the beautiful snow outside, but wearing, it seemed to Elsie, the same glad, bright look that had come to her face the evening before. With a burst of tears, the child threw herself upon the lifeless form, crying out, "O, mother, mother! I'm so glad I told you the truth; it was my last chance!"

### 5. *Envy.*

This little fox gets into the heart of the youngest. A very little girl saw the love and care her mother gave to the baby boy who had just come into the home, and a bitter, envious feeling rose in her breast. "Mother," she said, "don't you love me too?" "To be sure," was the reply, "I love you both." "Well," said the

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jealous little maiden, "I thought baby was getting all the attention." Envy is foolish, and often cruel. I have heard of a boy, who envied his sick brother, and took away the grapes and other nice things that had been given to the poor little sufferer. "Envy is cruel as the grave."

This was the feeling Satan had when he tempted Adam and Eve. He envied their happiness in Eden. It was the feeling which Saul had when he threw javelins at David. He envied him the praises of the people, and the favour of God. It was the feeling which the Scribes and Pharisees had when they crucified Jesus. They delivered Him up "for envy." A man of envious spirit, who lived long ago, was very sad-looking one day. People said, "Either some great evil has happened to him, or some great good to another."

A girl, looking out of the window, saw people flitting into a large house opposite. The furniture was very rich and beautiful. There were plenty of servants. The little daughter of the house seemed to be always riding in a carriage, or on the back of a Shetland pony. "Mother," said the girl at the window, with sour looks and pouting lips, "I never get a ride, I must always go on foot, and I never have servants attending to me." "My dear," said her mother, "that little rich girl whom you envy, would part with all if she could walk like you. She is a cripple. You are envying her; would you change places with her?"

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### 6. *Forgetfulness of God.*

We shall lose the greatest good if we let this little fox live in our hearts. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." How can we forget Him? Many persons and things we may forget, but how can we forget our Heavenly Father who has done everything for us, who has made us and made all things for us richly to enjoy? I have read of a boy whose father had gone to India and left him at a boarding school. A friend of the father visited this country, and before returning to India went to see the boy that he might take back a report to his parent. "Have you had a letter lately from your father?" he asked. "I'd a letter a week ago," was the son's reply. "I'm glad of that; he was very ill the last time I heard, and I was anxious to know if he had quite recovered. What did your father say about his health?" The boy looked puzzled. "Have you the letter about you?" inquired the gentleman. The boy fumbled in his pockets. He brought out a top and a handful of marbles. Then he came upon the letter, dirty and crumpled, with the Indian post-mark upon it; but it had not been opened at all. The boy had never read it. "Well, I forgot," he said, trying to laugh, yet looking rather ashamed. Well might he feel shame. However ungrateful it is to forget an earthly father, how much more ungrateful it is to forget our Heavenly Father! We cannot forget Him if we truly



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love Him. Do you love Him? I wonder who would not love Him.

I have spoken of six "little foxes that spoil the vines" — "Angry Passion," "By-and-By," "Conceit," "Deceit," "Envy," and "Forgetfulness of God." Now, what are you to do with these little foxes? In our text God says, "Take us the foxes." Take them to the Lord of the vineyard. He alone can destroy them. A minister was one day preaching on the text, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Among other things he said, "You must either find your sin out and bring it to the Lord, or the Lord will find your sin out and bring you to account for it." A person who heard the sermon was greatly troubled because of a sin she had committed. She found no rest, and came in her distress to the minister. He said, "You must just take your sin to Jesus." And he prayed with her that all her sin might be washed away in the blood of the Lamb. He met her a few days after. Her face was wreathed with smiles, she was no longer troubled; she had laid her sin on Jesus. Whatever sins you have besetting you, take them to Christ. "Take us the foxes," He says. Come to us. He asks you to join with Him. Take advantage of His strength and help. What sin can stand in His presence? It withers like a rootless weed in the sun. We do not need to look for Him when help is needed. He desires to be ever with us to keep us from all evil.

## The Flowers of Spring.

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"The flowers appear upon the earth."—*Song of Solomon ii. 12.*

THESE words are part of a description of spring. That season has again come round to us; and, though the flowers of spring are not so plentiful as those of summer, we value them even more highly because they come to us after the bareness and deadness of winter. Indeed, the first of them appear before winter has really taken its departure. It seemed strange, this very last week, to see the yellow daffodils blooming, in all the wealth of summer beauty, above the snow. The spring comes to chase winter from the earth, to make the earth beautiful with its carpet of green and enamel of flowers. God says to the spring, "Go to the hillsides, and clothe them with tender grass for the little lambs. Go to the woods, and tell the trees to put forth their buds. Go to the rivers and streams, and bid them sparkle in the brighter sun. Go to the fields, and prepare the

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soil for the seed. Go to the gardens where the flowers lie, and waken them up from the sleep of winter."

In winter we are glad to learn our lessons mostly indoors; but when spring comes we are tempted by the sunshine outside. I like sometimes at this season to speak to you of the things God has written for our instruction in the book of nature, as these are explained to us in this Holy Book of Revelation. The praise of God is sung by the lark as it soars in the air. It is hummed by the insect as it flits about; and it is whispered by the flowers that show their happy faces when the storms of winter are past.

The flowers have been called the stars of earth, the smiles of God. The bride has her bouquet of flowers. Flowers brighten the chamber of sickness, and we lay them tenderly on the coffins of the dead. May we not learn some precious lessons from the flowers that appear upon the earth?

*1. The flowers appear upon the earth, and speak to us of God Himself.*

He made them. No one else could. God alone can form and paint a flower. There was a French nobleman who was an infidel. "No God," was the language of his heart. He saw no Creator's power in the world of beauty, of wisdom, and of deep mystery around him; no Heavenly Father's loving hand in the sweet joys with which

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his days were crowned. But sad reverses came, and he had only the hard confinement and scanty comforts of a prisoner's cell. Looking up through the grated windows of his dreary prison, no fair prospect gladdened his eyes. The little courtyard was bounded by gloomy walls. And his hungry eyes sought in vain for some bit of beauty, something to assure him that light and freshness had not faded from the world, though the sun of his own was hidden in gloom.

But one day he saw, in a sheltered corner of the courtyard, and near the grating through which came to him the only light and gladness of the world from which he was shut off, a little tuft of green leaves. Day after day he watched their unfolding, as they lifted themselves up from the earth toward the sun, and broadened, and gathered strength and beauty. When he opened his eyes in the morning, after a night of unrest, his heart grew cold as his gaze fell on the bars of his prison; but peace came to his sad soul as he turned to his precious plant, and watched it as it trembled under the passing breeze, and shook from its leaves the drops of dew which shone like diamonds in the morning sun. At length he saw a little cluster of buds upon it. As day by day the buds grew in size, he watched them with a deep and tender interest. At last they opened, and the fair, sweet blossoms in their silent beauty spoke to him as no words of human lips had ever done. His heart was touched. Away deep down in it he was forced to say, "There is a God. I

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know it; I feel it. No mortal hand has made and cared for this beautiful little flower. It has grown, and blossomed into loveliness under the care of a greater than man, even the eternal God." Yes, the flowers speak to us of God Himself, of the great Creator who has made them to appear upon the earth.

*2. The flowers appear upon the earth, and speak of God's love to us.*

A mother wishing to impress her child with this truth, went out one spring morning and sowed some flower seeds in the form of letters. In a few weeks after, the child came running into the house and cried, "O, mother! come into the garden and see what is there." They went out together, and the child pointed to where it was written in letters of flowers, "God is love." That is the lesson taught us by all the flowers, however they are sown. God might have given us only corn in the fields; but He has given us also flowers in the garden and by the roadside—beauty as well as food. We could have lived without flowers. If He has given so much to delight us, will He not give us of needful things? Has He not given you parents to watch over you, provided food to nourish, raiment to clothe, homes to shelter you? Has He not bestowed on you powers of understanding, and means of instruction? Has He not provided a Saviour for us, and promised us a heavenly home? God's love, which looks

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up at us from the smiling face of the sweet flower, shines out most clearly from the face of Jesus, who died for our sins, and rose from the grave, and ascended to heaven to prepare a place for them that love Him.

A gardener was one day transplanting lilies that had been growing too thickly. He had prepared a fresh plot for them in a cool, half-shaded spot. A little girl was watching. She followed him from place to place, wondering what he could be doing. At last she asked, "Why are you digging up the sweet lilies?" "That they may grow better," he replied. As he looked down into her little, blue, wondering eyes, tears came into his own. "What makes you cry?" asked the child. "I was thinking of a sweet lily of mine that was transplanted long ago," he said. "Was it put into a better place?" the little maiden asked. "Oh, yes, into a far better place," he answered; "it was carried to a garden where it has the best of care, where the sun can never wither it nor the storms beat upon its tender beauty." "How nice!" she said; "how glad you must be that your lily is safe!" "Yes, I am glad," was his reply. "Then why do you cry?" she next inquired. The gardener made answer, "Because I miss my lily so much. My home is sad without it." "Shall you not see it again, sometime?" "If it please God," said he; "my lily is blooming for me in Paradise." God often transplants children that are, to their parents, bright little human blossoms by life's thorny wayside. He does it through love to them and to

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those who are left behind. He takes them away from the rough winds of this cold world that they may bud and bloom in heaven.

Let the flowers that appear on the earth remind us, then, (1) of God Himself, who sends everything in its season to us, and (2) of His love for us, even when He takes from us those we love. And let us so love Him that we shall be transplanted one day to the Paradise above,

Where everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers.







LECTURES ON FOREIGN  
TRAVEL.



## The White City of the Dark Continent.

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IT was with great pleasure that I looked forward to a visit of three brief months, in 1897, to the North of Africa—that great continent of which little more than the margin was explored before the nineteenth century. Even to get a glimpse of that mysterious land, the scene of so much courageous and fruitful enterprise in recent times, was an enticing prospect; and, the thousand-and-one things to be done before leaving having, somehow, been got through, I started off alone. It was a cold night in the end of January. In some places it had been quite a blizzard, and it would have been harder to turn away from home had I not been following the swallows, who go south to spend the winter where the sun shines.

When the second morning dawns we find ourselves at Marseilles, and beyond the region of the snow. The hour is yet early, so I book my luggage. I am told to be on the look-out, for even the railway officials are swindlers. And I am at least mildly astonished when, proffering a silver coin to pay the charge on the luggage, moderate enough—three halfpence—I only receive thanks instead of my change; and I scarcely feel able to express

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a remonstrance equal to the occasion. I get a peep at the cathedral; send a line to expecting friends that I have reached so far; find out the steamer office, where my ticket must be stamped, and then secure my luggage again. The steamer in which I have to cross the Mediterranean strikes one as a rather poor-looking specimen, which on the Clyde one would almost expect to be relegated to the yard where firewood is made. The so-called spacious cabin for three is a small cupboard, with three shelves. Fortunately, as there are few passengers, the third man is, for a consideration, stowed away elsewhere. My mate, for the time being, is an old French captain, who is returning to his home in Algiers. He tells me he was born a Roman Catholic, but that he is "not very ardent."

I had, before leaving home, been assured, by one of our Saltcoats captains who had often been there, that I should probably find the Gulf of Lyons stormy. It, however, seems on its best behaviour, and I am fondly hoping the rest of the voyage will be as pleasant; but, alas! the savage-looking cliffs of Marseilles are scarcely out of sight when the dreaded *mal de mer* summons me to stand, and—I do not wait for more, but surrender at discretion. Helpless and forlorn, I have scarce strength to tumble into my berth, where I lie for the next twenty-four hours. The dinner-bell summons me in vain. My sleep in the night-watches is a fevered dream. And this is the great regal Mediterranean! I understand what the cruel empire of the sea means, and feel out of my depths, or

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like a fish out of water. I sadly remember that Dr. Johnson describes a ship as "a jail, with the chance of being drowned thrown in." Only the news, brought to me late in the afternoon, that Algiers is in sight, induces me to make the attempt to pull myself together, and dress for going ashore. I still feel too ill to notice more than that the city lies on the slope of the hill, white and glistening in the sunshine, beginning at the margin of the sea and only ending where the hill pierces the sky. It is well called "The White City," and is fantastically beautiful. As soon as the mail-boat enters the harbour, the people gather and throng to see the arrivals. The Arab-porters, lightly clad, with limbs which seem as if cast in bronze, rush on board and point to their badge with its number, as the sign that luggage may be confidently committed to their care. I am meekly following one who has slung my luggage about him, when, a gentle hand is laid on my shoulder. It is the Rev. Dr. Watson of Dundee, whose term of service in the Presbyterian Church has been fulfilled, and whom I have come to relieve. He has got a touch of the sun that makes his cheeks glow, and as the weather, he tells me, has been rather wet, and the sunshine scantier than usual, I cherish the not improbable supposition that I, too, may receive similar adornment from the orb of day. We find ourselves in a somewhat ramshackle vehicle with two horses—no carriage, however light, goes with fewer in Algiers. Our course is a winding one up from

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the wharf to the first level of the city, and thence through some of the main thoroughfares till we reach the south-eastern suburbs. The hotel is built on the side of the hill, and fortunately it was only after I had left it I heard some people say that the slightest dislodgement would bring down the whole affair. Now comes the bargaining with the driver, who, like all others there who are hired, thinks it would not be respectful to accept what is given at first. Well, the London cabby has been known to say to one enquiring what is his fare—"The legal fare is 1s. The mean man's fare is 1s 3d. The gentleman's fare is 1s 6d. Now, which are you, governor?" While the Irish driver will say—"I'll lave it to your honour; there's some as gives me as little as half-a-crown!" It is perhaps not wonderful that his Arab comrade in North Africa is not content with his half-crown, and is prepared if necessary to wait a while in hope of getting the inevitable something more.

Now that I have the solid satisfaction of *terra firma*, I begin to feel like myself again; and am ready to forgive the Mediterranean for the sake of the fair land to which I have been brought. My room is paved with mosaics. The window-sill is of marble. Outside the window is an almond tree with lovely white blossom, which reminds one of its use by the author of Ecclesiastes as an emblem of old age. There is nothing here to remind one that it is winter. The orange and lemon trees are hanging with fruit in all the gardens, which are brilliant also with geraniums, roses, and a

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great variety of flowers. The Eucalyptus tree, largely imported from Australia, is planted everywhere, with the happiest effect in draining the soil and clearing the air of fever germs. Here, too, is the pepper tree, whose leaves, when pressed, give a genuinely pungent odour. Next day I elect to go higher up the hill, to a smaller and more homely hotel, kept by a Swiss French lady. There I get a room on the second floor, the window looking down over the city and out to the tideless Mediterranean, whose blue waves show just a creamy line where they meet the shore. Of this view, I never tire. In the moonlight it is enchanting; the white houses dimly visible, the lights dotted all over the hillside, and reflected in the water like stars. Mustapha Superieur, as this portion is called, unrolls a panorama of huge hotels, elaborate villas, simple chalets, and fair Moorish dwellings, nestling among beautiful gardens. Those who are guests at the hotel, while I am there, are two good specimens of honest Scotch lasses, two German ladies, a Polish lady, and a young Englishman in delicate health, who is acting as organist in the Episcopal Church for the season.

With these I get tolerably familiar, meeting as we do of necessity at least twice a day. The breakfast is always brought up to our bedroom shortly after eight o'clock. I managed (except once) to be up in readiness for it. Most people, I believe, think the flavour of that refreshment improved by taking it in bed. It is a simple meal consisting of coffee, rolls and butter. At

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twelve comes déjeuner, corresponding to our luncheon; and there is also dinner, of six or seven courses, at seven o'clock. By the latter hour our work or wanderings are over for the day, and as we leisurely discuss the dainty dishes, sufficient to satisfy a less modest appetite than mine, we compare notes as to our engagements since the morning. With such a company, you can imagine it was often an occasion of keen wit, flashing repartee, and happy epigram.

I had a splendid chance of realising the sad effects of the Tower of Babel—as well as of acquiring a little more French than, unfortunately, I possessed. Indeed, the young Englishman and I endeavoured to study together in the forenoon a little of the adopted language of the place. I do not venture to claim that either of us got so far as a young man, who said he could now think in French, which evoked the crushing rejoinder—"Well, that's a blessing, for it's more than you could ever do in English." Nor do I feel inclined to ask their opinion of my French. It is so easy for them to reply with a delightfully polite ambiguity, as a Frenchman did to an Englishman on one occasion: "It is wonderful; in all my life I never heard anything like it." But even good linguists as our Continental neighbours are, they stumble at many of our English idioms and phrases. One of our Scotch ladies having been confined to her room for a few days, on coming downstairs, and appearing again at the table, was saluted by the intentionally polite remark: "I am



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delighted, mademoiselle, that you have been able to descend." A despairing Frenchman said: "I cannot understand your language; I have been at great pains to repeat the word *hydrophobia*, and to my amazement I learn that the doctors sometimes pronounce it *fatal*!" There are a number of Americans making a short stay in Algiers. They are always interesting, and sometimes amusing. I remember one lady, the wife of a New York editor, who would say to people whom she met: "My husband is a press-man. We live in a flat, and are not very well off. Now I have told you all about myself. We Americans take an interest in everyone we meet. Now tell me about yourself."

It is, however, time to speak about Algiers, or Alger, as it is called by the people themselves. It is, with its suburbs, a populous place of no less than 100,000 inhabitants, the chief city of Algeria, which is now a French colony, and has had a very remarkable history. The whole province was the ancient granary of Rome. It captivates the imagination of the antiquarian and the scholar, draws forth the energies of the merchant, and engages the research of the man of science. Many tides of conquest have passed over it—Phoenician, Roman, Vandal, Greek, Arab, Turkish, and now French. The shades of mighty hosts and nations seem still to linger there.

Rudyard Kipling sings—"Oh East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet": but to a considerable degree they do meet, and

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the junction is Algiers. It strangely combines the gaiety of Paris, and the charm of calm Eastern life. One can hardly attempt to cope with the crowding impressions he receives. It is a veritable ever-changing kaleidoscope. It seems to call for a snapshot camera, with hundreds of slides, and ability to produce in colour. Let us begin with the native quarter of the town. It is closely packed together, with a seemingly interminable network of alleys, and is like a rabbit warren. If one starts from the Casbah, the citadel garrisoned by French soldiers, which crowns the height, one can thread his way down without fear of losing himself, for downward inevitably leads to the French quarter. The streets or lanes are narrow, often not more than six or eight feet in breadth, and roughly paved with cobble stones. Being on a slope, every two yards or so there is a step, and every step, being greasy and highly polished by bare feet or soft leather shoes, is a trap for the unwary.

The houses approach their opposite neighbours towards the top, and in many places are actually in contact, making the roadway a cool tunnel. The shops in the native part are mere holes in the wall, two or three cubic yards of space. If the wares are cumbrous, stands are erected outside. To see the work of the weaver or smith, cobbler, leather-embroiderer, or jeweller one must glance inside. To eyes accustomed to the outer glare it seems impossible that anything requiring minute examination can be done in the dim

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apartment, from which the dark eyes of the artificer look up enquiringly as you pause before it. Some, I am told, who do not require to work for a living, have one of these little shops as a convenient place for meeting their friends, as such are not invited, according to our custom, to the family circle at home. Their salutation seems to be something like this:—One touches the outstretched fingers of the other, then carries them to his lips, and gives a graceful wave. There seem to be constantly enacted before us scenes from the Old Testament and the “Arabian Nights.” Here is the calm, leisurely, ruminative spirit of the East, unchanged through three thousand years, which will not be hurried, which desires neither change nor progress, and lives its own life under the rule of the Frank as under their own Pashas long ago.

Here is the patriarch and his ass, the camel and his driver, Rebekah going to the well, turbaned and slippered Arabs speaking slowly and looking wise; and these in close connection with steam-trams, the railway train, and the pneumatic-tyred bicycle!

The dress of the lower classes is often very ragged and filthy. A market square full of Arabs resembles an animated ragshop. The poorer Arabs do not wear stockings, the poorest wear no shoes.

A predominant feature in the native quarter is dirt—dirt in the street and in the houses—dirt in bulk and in solution—dirt vaporous and dirt

## *THE WHITE CITY OF THE DARK CONTINENT.*

stagnant—dirt on the walls, the people, and the food. Everywhere is dirt. Another unpleasant feature is the prevalence of disease and deformity. An Arab afflicted with any mal-formation need never work. He can expose it, with the certainty of receiving alms; indeed, waiting before the cafés, with a hand hidden under a tattered cloak, will generally have the same result. They are very persistent. "Oh," said a lady to one, "I have no change." "But I can give you some," said the beggar. "Give me what belongs to God," was the way in which one besought alms. Children will follow you in the streets saying, "A little sou," or "Give me sou," with pathetic faces and pitiful tones. To reply, "Impshi," or "Rohh," whatever these terrible words may mean, was generally enough to send them off. The language of the Arabs sounds very peculiar. It is a combination of sneezing, and jangling, and the cry of a camel, and several other things I could not quite make out.

Soon after I arrived, the month of Fasting began, called Ramadan, or the Mussulman's Lent, during which they neither eat nor smoke nor drink from sunrise to sunset. It is a very trying time, and the Arabs are then under conditions of extreme hardship, for while fasting they do not continue their daily labour. Many of them pass the day squatting about the streets or lying about in their cafés, awaiting the hours of sunset. Then comes the recompense; the evening—ah, how sweet is the thought of it! It is an interesting sight to

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watch the Arabs preparing for the gun-fire at dusk to announce that they may once more eat, drink, and smoke. There they are, with their coffee ready to swallow down, and their fruit ready to eat. As soon as the desired signal is given, a great cry rends the air. It is a cry of thanksgiving. They shout "Chumdoolah"—"Thanks to Thee, O God"—and then they add something like this—"O God, I have fasted in obedience to Thee, I break the fast in partaking of the good things Thou providest. O God, forgive me my past and future sins. Amen." The native cafés, brightly lit up, and decorated with flowers and streamers of coloured paper, are packed during the evening with the followers of the Prophet.

There are a number of mosques in the city, where the faithful go to pray. No one can enter till he has removed his shoes. No one prays without first washing his feet in the marble fountain at the entrance. He then places his shoes on the matting in front of him, and performs his devotions. On one occasion on which I visited a mosque, the vast interior (of severe simplicity, wherein no device of any living thing is allowed) was filled with worshippers, who bowed and prostrated themselves with their faces touching the ground, while prayers were chanted from an elevated platform near the centre. It was an impressive sight, but largely, it is to be feared, formalism. One was candid enough to say—"We hear good words, prostrate ourselves on the ground, and leave them there."

## *THE WHITE CITY OF THE DARK CONTINENT.*

As we pass along the streets we get glimpses of dim interiors where handsome, black-browed Moors recline on low divans, smoking their pipes with infinite content, or sipping tiny cups of their beloved coffee. Little shoeblacks have, in quiet corners, their velvet-covered seats in which you can comfortably rest while they proceed to polish your boots. Though there is seldom any mud to be brushed off, the abundant dust creates a condition of things of which the little shoeblack is quick to take advantage. On the steps of a hotel in Kabylia we were rather astonished to hear a boy, with a knowing look, say, "Shine your boots, sir?"—a phrase of which he was evidently vastly proud. A lady upon whom one of these pressed his services said, "Don't you see I have yellow shoes?" "But I have yellow blacking?" he replied. It reminds us of a country church where it was gravely intimated there would be a meeting of the congregation next evening "to consider what colour the church should be white-washed." When trade is slack these little shoeblacks may be seen playing at draughts, dominoes, or cards with each other.

Where the houses mount the hill is the Presbyterian Church, usually known as the Scotch Church. It was built by the late Sir Peter Coats (who spent the last seven winters of his life in Algiers), and is a substantial, costly, and beautiful building, surrounded with palms, rose-trees, and lilac-leaved bougainvilleas. In this church, service is held during the six winter months by ministers sent out

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for that purpose from Scotland. The name of Sir Peter is still fragrant in Algiers—

“None knew him but to love him,  
None named him but to praise.”

He was the friend of every cause that lacked assistance. All, from the Consul downwards, were sure of finding his heart and purse open to them. And he did not wait till a good cause was brought under his notice. He was always asking of one and another, “Is there anyone you know would be the better of a little help?” It was a real luxury for him to give. Some accident had occurred where a road above the city ran along the edge of a ravine. Sir Peter undertook, at an expense of 30,000 francs, to rail round the dangerous part. It is no wonder that, in token of gratitude, the authorities of the city changed the name of one of the pathways leading up to his villa from “Road of the Sacred Heart” to “The Scotch Road.” His grounds were fenced in with wire and aloes against trespassers, except at one point, which (as those who knew his kind-heartedness said) had been purposely left, to give transgressors a chance!

As to the religious aspects of the place, the Arabs are Mohammedans, with a child-like belief in the infinite power and resources of God, and with an absolute submission to His will. They give scrupulous attention to ceremonial duties; but there seems little or nothing in their religion that excites high and noble impulses. Vice and

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wickedness thrive along with their religiousness. No people are harder to win for Christ than Mohammedans, not even Jews. They are a Jericho straitly shut up and walled around with prejudice and bigotry. There are many Jews in Algiers, with several synagogues. The Jewesses are picturesque figures with their black silk handkerchiefs round their heads, and vests embroidered with gold. They evidently like loud, striking colours, and a great deal of jewelry. "What did God give us ears for but to put earrings in?" You may see them lolling from dingy casements, like rainbows caught in cobwebs.

But now I must close with a few words on the climate. Algiers is a paradise for invalids. The sun shines, not the plaintive and apologetic luminary to which we are accustomed in winter; but a rich, roystering sun. The climate approaches perfection as nearly as any in the world. It is sheltered from the fiery atmosphere of the desert. There are no east winds, no fogs, no severe frost. The air is warm and light; the sky bright and clear. The mean temperature, night and day, in winter is 55°—about the same as in Scotland during summer. A lady whom I met there said, "I'm going to take in as much sunshine here as I can—enough to last me for next winter, too. It is delightful to feel one's bones warmed through and through." Once or twice the wind rose, windows banged, portentous clouds swept over the hill, the sky darkened, there were



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flashes of lightning, crashings of thunder, and a deluge of rain. But in a few minutes the sky cleared, and the sun shone as before. One was delighted to have it rain as a change. No doubt, in summer the sirocco is occasionally felt, with an almost stupifying heat, as if one were at the mouth of a furnace. The covers of books shrivel, and people put up their coat collars and pull their hats over their eyes to shelter their faces from the stinging wind and flying sand. But this only occurs in a mild degree in winter. Mosquitoes are, however, to be reckoned on. They come like a thief, under cover of darkness. When I heard (as I was dropping over to sleep) a whizzing, vibrating sound, I knew that the mosquitoes were lusting for my blood. It was not what they took that I grudged them, but what they left, the poison that quickly inflamed, leaving pain for a day or two, and the marks for a week. It was little comfort to be told they mostly troubled newcomers. These little drawbacks were soon forgotten, but I can never forget the sunny slopes, fragrant byways, and luxuriant lanes of Algiers. Yet it was not home, and so I returned—

“From wandering to and fro,  
In that land of rich romance,  
Where the silver olives grow.”

“It’s ill to lose the bands that God decreed to bind,  
Still will we be the children of the heather and the wind.  
Far away from home, oh ! it’s still for you and me  
That the bloom is blowing bonnie in the north countree.”

## A Long-Buried City.

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I WISH I could have taken you all with me on that day when I visited the ruins of Pompeii. But I ask you to come with me there, in imagination.

From the summit of Vesuvius I had seen the white cottages of the peasants, and the smiling villages scattered all over the valley that encompasses the mountain. But at one point, at some distance, there was, framed in black cypresses, a mass of masonry that looked like headstones in a churchyard. That, I found, was what had already been uncovered of the ancient town of Pompeii. The train from Naples takes you almost to the gate. There are the narrow, paved streets, intersecting one another at right angles, and the roofless houses on either side—the whole place empty, save for the step of the curious visitor. What does this mean? Here is a whole town that was overwhelmed, hermetically sealed up, and forgotten for well-nigh 1700 years. Its treasures are still being unearthed, and there is work to be done in this way for a hundred years to come.

I looked up. There was Vesuvius—like some gigantic altar, and the white smoke, rising in slow folds, fold over fold, and, before the gentle breeze, stretching away until lost in the dim distance. It is not always so innocent-looking. For the mountain sides are covered with lava that has

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cooled and hardened, exactly resembling the entrails of some great monster—literally, the bowels of the earth. Sometimes the crater of Vesuvius seems as if it were the very mouth of hell, belching forth sulphurous vapours and fire, and at intervals, with loud thunderings, throwing showers of red-hot cinders and stones high into the air; while, from tremendous chasms in the sides, flow streams of molten lava that pulsate and throb their way down the mountain side, cooling and becoming less liquid, till they end in these thick, gnarled, twisted masses of brownness and blackness.

But once, at least, in the year 79 after Christ, some things more terrible happened. It was the sultry month of August. Here was a gay voluptuous resort of Roman princes and nobles. Vesuvius was then a mountain wooded to the summit—thick sprinkled on the corner slopes with luxurious villas—when suddenly it let loose its pent-up fury. Up from the mountain rose a dense column of black smoke, outspreading at a great height till the country for miles round was overshadowed. Profound darkness followed, and there fell showers of light ashes which had come red hot from the burning crater, until this ill-fated Pompeii, with all her countless wealth of luxury and art, lay buried out of sight. The fall at first was gradual, and a large proportion of the people escaped with their lives. But many lingered in the hope of a cessation of those terrible showers, or striving to rescue their precious treasures; and

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were entombed in the mass of ashes, in their own houses, or whilst hurrying too late along the choked-up street.

Above this buried city, various eruptions deposited fresh materials. Rich vegetable mould accumulated, and the olive and the vine flourished twenty or thirty feet above the streets once alive with traffic, and gay with festivity. Its re-discovery was quite accidental, and during more than a century past excavations have taken place, restoring the dead city to life. Its streets and market-places, temples and theatres, shops and houses, have been disintombed. Through them we may now wander, and call up a vivid picture of life in the Roman town in the first century of our era.

The high wall that encircled the town is still visible. It is about twenty feet thick, and at a distance of one hundred yards or so watch-towers rise. The broadest street is only about eight yards wide. Stepping stones cross the streets like those by which a shallow river is crossed, and just wide enough for wheels to go on either side. They must have made the charioteer's post no sinecure. The roadways are worn deeply with the chariot wheels. One can also see how the hands of those who stooped to drink at the fountains, in the long-gone years, have worn a deep hollow in the solid stone.

The Forum, or market-place, was, as in all Roman towns, the centre of the life of the community. It is surrounded by public edifices, and

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from it the principal thoroughfares diverge. The pedestals of the statues of the eminent men of the town still bear the names upon them. There are temples in abundance. If not religious, the Pompeians were at least superstitious, anxious to propitiate Jupiter, and Mercury, and Venus, and Isis, and all other gods and goddesses. In the temple of Isis we saw uncovered the place where the priest was concealed when the goddess delivered her oracles; and, in connection with the statue of the goddess, is a pipe fixed in the wall, which was the secret speaking-tube. The artifice employed to deceive those who would learn her will, is thus made plainly manifest.

At more than one part of the town are costly baths—cold, tepid, hot, and vapour—elegantly fitted up, with niches in the dressing-rooms for the clothes of the bathers, and all in so perfect a condition that they look as if they could be made use of to-morrow. Here are bakers' shops, with their hand-mills formed of two large round stones, and the ovens, in some of which were found batches of charred bread. Wine shops abound, with their marble counters, and large earthen jars; chemists' shops, too, known by having upon them the ancient symbol of the serpent.

Many of the houses were most luxuriously fitted up. One of them, I noticed, had on the threshold, in mosaic, the figure of a barking dog chained, and the words, "*Cane Canem*"—Beware of the dog. Some of the houses had two open courts, with gardens and fountains in the centre,

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the one being the more public and the other the more private part of the house. Exquisite paintings are frescoed on the walls, and in many cases they are as fresh as if painted yesterday.

Passing through the streets, one's eye is frequently arrested by inscriptions, in red paint, on the walls. The town was, at the time of its overthrow, in the throes of a municipal election; and so the virtues of particular candidates were emblazoned in this manner. It has been noticed, however, that there was no attempt to detract from the merits of an opponent. The placard defamatory is evidently a modern invention. Names and remarks are scribbled up on the vacant spaces. And this contemptuous sentence can be deciphered, "I am surprised, O wall, that thou hast not fallen into ruins under the tiresomeness of so many stupid writers!" I may say, in passing, that one was amazed to find how even the most sacred places in Italy were not free from the scribbled names of people who had visited them. Little wonder that the monk who took us through the Catacombs of St. Calistus, pointing to such defacements, said, "Names of the fools!"

We saw abundant evidence that many hundreds at least, had met their doom on the day when Pompeii was overwhelmed. In one underground cellar were a heap of bones, and we were told that skeletons of seventeen women had been found there. The ashes had, in many cases, preserved the form of the person; and liquid plaster of

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Paris being poured into these moulds, we have placed before us their very attitude in their last moments. Here is one woman with her face in her hands, seeking to avoid the suffocating ashes rained down upon her. There is a man with outstretched hands and clutching fingers—hundreds of pieces of silver being found beside him, a satire of the dead upon the folly of the living. There is a poor dog writhing on his back in the throes of death.

From some inscriptions that have been deciphered, it is evident there were, at least, a few Christians in Pompeii, though the tradition is that (like Lot in Sodom) they received warning before-hand of danger, and were enabled to escape. But, alas! the prevailing signs are those of an intensely pleasure-loving community. There are the remains of several theatres, and an immense amphitheatre whose arena was steeped in blood of gladiators, who fought there before assembled and enraptured thousands, sword parrying sword till one of the combatants reeled and fell. There are unmistakable tokens that pleasure-loving was not the worst of the faults of the people of Pompeii. There are signs of the vicious lives they led, flaunting themselves in the public street. Many of the frescoes in their houses are of the most shameful description. Happily the worst of them are covered, or locked up, as too disgraceful for the eye to look upon.

Beautiful architecture, exquisite painting, enchanting sculptures—all are there; but they did

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not elevate the morals of the people, rather were these things used to pander to a vicious taste. To say that we have there, "sculptured, petrified, embalmed abomination," is not too strong an expression. Cicero and Sallust lived part of the year in that town, representing, as they might appropriately do, eloquence and literature; but neither art, eloquence, nor literature, nor all together were able to elevate the people. You may open museums and picture galleries on the Lord's-day, as has been done in some of our cities, and this may be a means of recreation to the mind, and is undoubtedly better than some other ways of spending a weekly holiday. But it will not make the first day of the week what it was intended to be, a holy-day. It will not make the life of the people clean and pure.

"Nothing but the Word of God believed,  
No one but the Christ of God received,"

can do that.

Man may be nothing better than a beast that lives its narrow round of bodily gratification, and then perishes for ever. It may matter little how low, and sordid, and selfish, his life on earth may be. He may eat, drink, and be merry, knowing to-morrow that he will die. But if he be a spiritual, an immortal being, for whom the Christ of God gave up His life on the Cross, then is his the great responsibility of living as a redeemed son of God, with his eye on Heaven and eternity.



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